

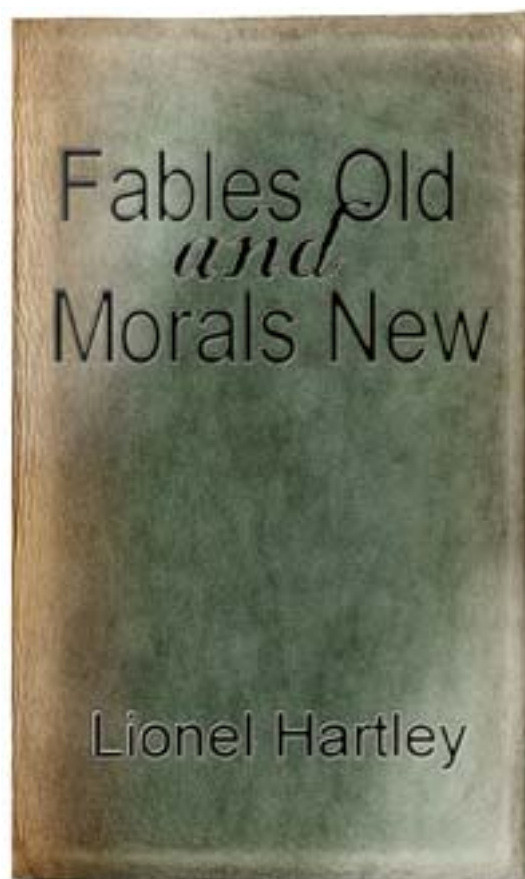
Fables Old *and* Morals New



Lionel Hartley



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Cover of the 1966 edition

Fables Old *and* Morals New



Lionel Hartley

Fables Old and Morals New

(140+ fables and other stories listed in alphabetical order with contemporary morals for each.)

Lionel Hartley

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Introduction

Once upon a time...

As a regular user of the public library, while at the counter one day, another customer asked the librarian for a book of morality tales.

When shown a copy of the only book listed in the catalogue — *Aesop's Fables*, she glanced inside and said, “Why are there no morals listed? I expected each to end with, ‘And the moral of the story is...’ or ‘The bottom line is ...’ or maybe ‘... and they all lived happily ever after’.”

Jenny, the librarian turned to me and said, “Here’s your opportunity, Lionel, you write one for us but include a relevant contemporary moral for each. You could call it something like, ‘Old Fables with New Morals’.”

And so this book, *‘Fables Old and Morals New’*, was born.”

And they all lived happily ever after ... or did they?”

A few days later I was reading my favourite

reference book (The Holy Bible) and I found several references that speak negatively against fables. However, like the proverbs of Solomon *et al*, there is great merit in heeding the morals as morality tales, fables, apologues, allegories, and parables are there simply to illustrate the point.

(1 Timothy 1:4) “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.”

(1 Timothy 4:7) “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.”

(2 Timothy 4:4) “And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

(Titus 1:14) “Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.”

(2 Peter 1:16) “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”

— Lionel Hartley,
Introduction to the first edition, 1966

A Sponge Knoweth No Discrimination

The frog - he had a problem.
His pond was far too green.
Another's pond was bluer
(he heard the birds had seen).

But Froggie had an answer:
he'd suck up all the green,
And so he bought a bath sponge —
the biggest ever seen!

Well, sponges have no manners.
They suck up good and bad.
And very soon an empty pond
was all that poor frog had.

And the moral of the story is:

A sponge does no deciding - only you can choose.
Expose your mind to evil and you will surely lose.
By choosing what you see and hear;
What you eat and do,
Then you control the input

And you won't get sucked in too!"

And the moral of the story is:

Watch what you look at; it becomes your thoughts_

Watch your thoughts; they become your words_

Watch your words; they become your actions_

Watch your actions; they become your habits_

Watch your habits; they become your character_

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny_

Watch your destiny; it affects your eternity!

— Lionel Hartley



Androcles and the Lion

Once upon a time a slave named Androcles escaped from his master and fled to the forest.

As he was wandering about there he came upon a Lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the Lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him.

As he came near, the Lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain.

He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the Lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog.

Then the Lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live.

But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the Lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the Lion, after the latter had been kept without food for several days.

The Emperor and all his Court came to see the

spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena.

Soon the Lion was let loose from his den, and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim.

But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognised his friend, and fawned upon him, and licked his hands like a friendly dog.

The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story.

Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the Lion let loose to his native forest.

And the moral of the story is, “Gratitude is the sign of noble souls”.

— Aesop’s Fables

Ant and the Dove

Once upon a time an Ant went to the bank of a river to quench its thirst, and being carried away by the rush of the stream, was on the point of drowning.

A Dove sitting on a tree overhanging the water plucked a leaf and let it fall into the stream close to her.

The Ant climbed onto it and floated in safety to the bank.

Shortly afterwards a bird catcher came and stood under the tree, and laid his lime-twigs (which were used to catch birds) for the Dove, which sat in the branches.

The Ant, understanding his use, stung him in the foot.

In pain the bird catcher threw down the twigs, and the noise made the Dove take wing.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “One good turn deserves another”.

Ant and Grasshopper

Once upon a time on summer's day, a Grasshopper was hopping about in a field, chirping and singing to its heart's content.

An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.'

Why not come and chat with me,' said the Grasshopper, 'instead of toiling and moiling in that way?'

'I am helping to lay up food for the winter,' said the Ant, 'and recommend you to do the same.'

'Why bother about winter?' said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present.'

But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil.

When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “It is best to prepare for the days of necessity”.

Ass and Lapdog

Once upon a time a Farmer came one day to the stables to see to his beasts of burden: among them was his favourite Ass, that was always well fed and often carried his master.

With the Farmer came his Lapdog, who danced about and licked his hand and frisked about as happy as could be.

The Farmer felt in his pocket, gave the Lapdog some dainty food, and sat down while he gave his orders to his servants.

The Lapdog jumped into his master's lap, and lay there blinking while the Farmer stroked his ears.

The Ass, seeing this, broke loose from his halter and commenced prancing about in imitation of the Lapdog.

The Farmer could not hold his sides with laughter, so the Ass went up to him, and putting his feet upon the Farmer's shoulder attempted to climb into his lap.

The Farmer's servants rushed up with sticks and pitchforks and educated the Ass.

And the moral of the story is, “Clumsy jesting is no joke”.



Ass in the Lion's Skin

Once upon a time an Ass found a Lion's skin that the hunters had left out in the sun to dry. He put it on and went towards his native village.

All fled at his approach, both men and animals, and he was a proud Ass that day.

In his delight he lifted up his voice and brayed, but then every one knew him, and his owner came up and gave him a sound cudgelling for the fright he had caused.

And shortly afterwards a Fox came up to him and said: 'Ah, I knew you by your voice.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "Fine clothes may disguise, but silly words will disclose a fool".

Ass's Brains

Once upon a time the Lion and the Fox went hunting together.

The Lion, on the advice of the Fox, sent a message to the Ass, proposing to make an alliance between their two families.

The Ass came to the place of meeting, overjoyed at the prospect of a royal alliance.

But when he came there the Lion simply pounced on the Ass, and said to the Fox: 'Here is our dinner for to-day.

Watch you here while I go and have a nap.

Woe betide you if you touch my prey.' The Lion went away and the Fox waited; but finding that his master did not return, ventured to take out the brains of the Ass and ate them up.

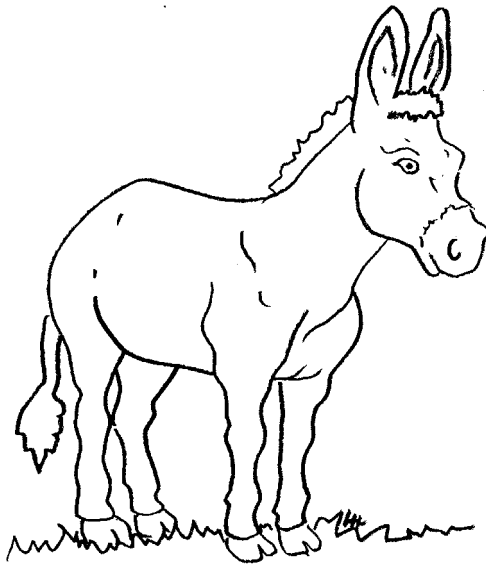
When the Lion came back he soon noticed the absence of the brains, and asked the Fox in a terrible voice: 'What have you done with the brains?'

'Brains, your Majesty! it had none, or it would never

have fallen into your trap.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Wit has always an answer ready”.



Avaricious and Envious

Once upon a time two neighbours came before Jupiter and prayed him to grant their hearts' desire.

Now the one was full of avarice, and the other eaten up with envy.

So to punish them both, Jupiter granted that each might have whatever he wished for himself, but only on condition that his neighbour had twice as much.

The Avaricious man prayed to have a room full of gold.

No sooner said than done; but all his joy was turned to grief when he found that his neighbour had two rooms full of the precious metal.

Then came the turn of the Envious man, who could not bear to think that his neighbour had any joy at all.

So he prayed that he might have one of his own eyes put out, by which means his companion would become totally blind.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Vices are their own punishment”.

Bald Man and the Fly

Once upon a time there was a Bald Man who sat down after work on a hot summer's day.

A Fly came up and kept buzzing about his bald pate, and stinging him from time to time.

The Man aimed a blow at his little enemy, but his palm came on his head instead.

Again the Fly tormented him, but this time the Man was wiser.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “You will only injure yourself if you take notice of despicable enemies”.

Barrel Organ Grinder

His first time at a barbecue,
The organ grinder watched in awe
As his neighbour turned the sizzling roast
Upon the spit Above the glowing fire.

His arm in rhythmic motion
Emulated the grinder's trade
Yet the only sound
Was a hiss and a crackle
From the cast-iron box he 'played'.

The organ grinder, puzzled, watched
And finally exclaims,
"I don't know what you're playing,
But... your monkey's up in flames!"

And the moral of the story is, "Things are seldom
what they seem".

— Lionel Hartley

Batrachian Preacher

“Every morning the rooster crows...”

(Now hang-on-a-minute - that's not how it goes!)

Every morning when the rooster should crow,

(If we had one, that is, and I ought to know),

At the first glimpse of sun (or artificial light

Streaming from my window bright)

A Loud-mouthed Frog in the drainpipe, sings;

It's voice in haunting echo rings

Up, up the drain-pipe (or is it down?)

He (she?) sings a song to wake the town.

Though lacking the rooster's plumage rare-

Bold colours of feathers, suffused with hue

The early-morning voice is there:

With a 'croak-croak-croak'...

Not a 'cock-a-doodle-doo'!

Not sunrise-silhouetted on a distant fence

But in a gloomy drainpipe,

Hidden from my vision

This songster chants his rousing call-

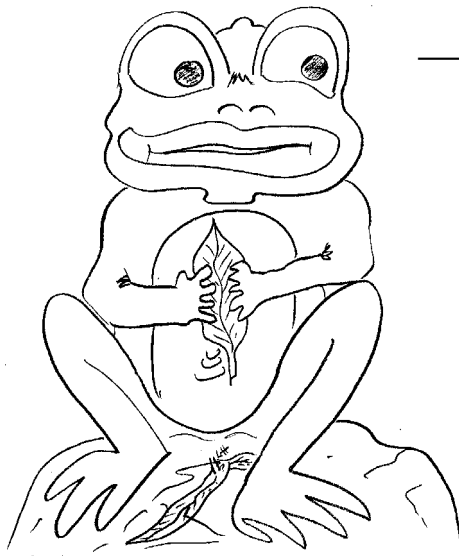
Complete with a moral,

If I stop to listen.

Just as Apostle Peter was shocked to reality
At the prophesied rooster's cry,
The 'croak-croak-croak' from the unseen throat
Is a wake-up shock to reality's call
Of the near-coming judgement to face us all."

Time to get up and confess our denial,
To be reconciled, start life anew-
By confession bold and honesty rare;
By penitence true and submission too,
And acceptance of forgiveness not withheld
(A gift freely offered, pre-paid by His blood)
To restore our relationship with a loving God
Who cares enough to preach to me
Through a noisy sun-up Frog.

— Lionel Hartley



Belling the Cat

Once upon a time, long ago, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the Cat.

Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case.'

You will all agree,' said he, 'that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us.

Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her.

I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the Cat.

By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood.' This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: 'That is all very well, but who is to bell the Cat?' The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke.

And the moral of the story is, “It is easy to propose impossible remedies”.



Blowing Hot and Cold

Once upon a time a Man had lost his way in a wood on a bitter winter's night.

As he was roaming about, a Satyr came up to him, and finding that he had lost his way, promised to give him a lodging for the night, and guide him out of the forest in the morning.

As he went along to the Satyr's cell, the Man raised both his hands to his mouth and kept on blowing at them.'

What do you do that for?' said the Satyr.'

My hands are numb with the cold,' said the Man, 'and my breath warms them.' After this they arrived at the Satyr's home, and soon the Satyr put a smoking dish of porridge before him.

But when the Man raised his spoon to his mouth he began blowing upon it.'

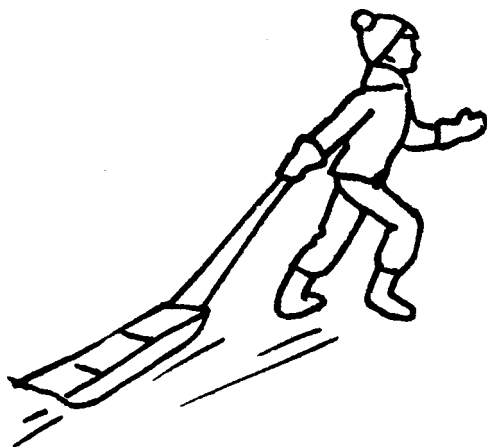
And what do you do that for?' said the Satyr.'

The porridge is too hot, and my breath will cool it.' 'Out you go,' said the Satyr.'

I will have nought to do with a man who can blow hot and cold with the same breath.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16).



Bob May and Rudolph (True story)

Once upon a time a man named Bob May, depressed and brokenhearted, stared out his drafty apartment window into the chilling December night. His 4-year-old daughter Barbara sat on his lap quietly sobbing. Bob's wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer.

Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mommy could never come home. Barbara looked up into her dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?" Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question brought waves of grief, but also of anger. It had been the story of Bob's life. Life always had to be different for Bob.

Small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports. He was often called names he'd rather not remember.

From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in. Bob did complete college, married his loving wife and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression. Then he was blessed with his little girl. But it was all short-lived. Evelyn's bout with cancer

stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums. Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938.

Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift. But if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one - a storybook! Bob had created an animal character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope. Again and again Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling. Who was the character? What was the story all about?

The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form. The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. The name of the character? A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose. Bob finished the book just in time to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day. But the story doesn't end there.

The General Manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Wards went on to print, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed

Reindeer” and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores. By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million copies of Rudolph. That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Wards to print an updated version of the book.

In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Wards returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a best seller. Many toy and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter. But the story doesn’t end there either.

Bob’s brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore , it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of “White Christmas.”

The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning back to bless

him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad. In fact, being different can be a blessing."

Buffoon and Countryman

Once upon a time, at a country fair, there was a Buffoon who made all the people laugh by imitating the cries of various animals.

He finished off by squeaking so like a pig that the spectators thought that he had a porker concealed about him.

But a Countryman who stood by said: ‘Call that a pig s squeak! Nothing like it.

You give me till tomorrow and I will show you what it’s like.’ The audience laughed, but next day, sure enough, the Countryman appeared on the stage, and putting his head down squealed so hideously that the spectators hissed and threw stones at him to make him stop.’

You fools!’ he cried, ‘see what you have been hissing at,’ and held up a little pig whose ear he had been pinching to make him utter the squeals.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Men often applaud an imitation and hiss the real thing”.

Cat-Maiden

Once upon a time the gods were disputing whether it was possible for a living being to change its nature.

Jupiter said ‘Yes,’ but Venus said ‘No.’ So, to try the question, Jupiter turned a Cat into a Maiden, and gave her to a young man for a wife.

The wedding was duly performed and the young couple sat down to the wedding-feast.’

See,’ said Jupiter, to Venus, ‘how becomingly she behaves.

Who could tell that yesterday she was but a Cat? Surely her nature is changed?’ ‘Wait a minute,’ replied Venus, and let loose a mouse into the room.

No sooner did the bride see this than she jumped up from her seat and tried to pounce upon the mouse.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Nature will out”.

Clearing the Stream

Once upon a time an old-timer thought he had been taken in when he bought a mill alongside of a stream.

When he arrived at his new building, the waterwheel wasn't turning because there was no water in the stream! Angry, he strode back to the original owner and claimed that the waterwheel was broken."

Not at all," said the owner.

"I sold you a waterwheel and mill as good as any.

All you need to do is clear out the clutter upstream and get the water moving."

The new owner went back upstream and found that debris had jammed the water flow so that it was dammed up.

He pulled out the refuse and the water flowed, the wheel worked and he was in business.

And the moral relates to our walk with God.

We get angry when we don't see God working and "moving our waterwheel." Perhaps it's that God can't

send his blessings because our sins have clogged His flow of blessings.

Perhaps we need to clear the stream so the waterwheel can flow and we can be back in business.

Cock and Pearl

Once upon a time a cock was strutting up and down the farmyard among the hens when suddenly he saw something shinning amid the straw.'

Ho! ho!' quoth he, 'that's for me,' and soon rooted it out from beneath the straw.

What did it turn out to be but a Pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard? 'You may be a treasure,' quoth Master Cock, 'to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single barley-corn than a peck of pearls.'

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "Precious things are for those that can prize them".

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
(Matthew 7:6)

Countryman and Serpent

Once upon a time a Countryman's son, by accident, trod upon a Serpent's tail, which turned and bit him so that he died.

The father in a rage got his axe, and pursuing the Serpent, cut off part of its tail.

So the Serpent in revenge began stinging several of the Farmer's cattle and caused him severe loss.

Well, the Farmer thought it best to make it up with the Serpent, and brought food and honey to the mouth of its lair, and said to it: 'Let's forget and forgive; perhaps you were right to punish my son, and take vengeance on my cattle, but surely I was right in trying to revenge him; now that we are both satisfied why should not we be friends again?'

'No, no,' said the Serpent; 'take away your gifts; you can never forget the death of your son, nor I the loss of my tail.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "Injuries may be forgiven, but not forgotten".

Crow and the Pitcher

Once upon a time a Crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a Pitcher which had once been full of water

But when the Crow put its beak into the mouth of the Pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it.

He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair.

Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher.

Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher.

Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher.

Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher.

Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher.

Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher.

At last, at last, he saw the water mount up near him, and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Little by little does the trick”.

Cruel to be Kind

Once upon a time a little piece of wood complained bitterly because its owner kept whittling away at it, cutting it and filling it full of holes.

But the one who was cutting it so remorselessly paid no attention to its complaining.

He was making a flute out of that piece of ebony, and he was too wise to give up because the wood moaned so piteously.

His actions seemed to say, “Little piece of wood, without these holes and all this cutting, you would be an ugly stick forever-just a useless piece of ebony.

What I am doing now may make you think that I am destroying you when actually I am changing you into a flute whose sweet music will comfort sorrowing hearts.

My cutting you is the making of you, for only thus can you be a blessing to the world.”

And the moral of the story is that sometimes we need to be cruel to be kind.

Crying, ‘Wolf’

Once upon a time a young Shepherd Boy tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest.

It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement.

He rushed down towards the village calling out ‘Wolf, Wolf,’ and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time.

This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help.

But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out ‘Wolf, Wolf,’ still louder than before.

But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help.

So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy’s flock.

And the moral of the story is, “A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth”.

Dancing to the Fisher's Bagpipes

Once upon a time a Fisher took his bagpipes to the bank of a river, and played upon them with the hope of making the fish rise; but never a one put his nose out of the water.

So he cast his net into the river and soon drew it forth filled with fish.

Then he took his bagpipes again, and, as he played, the fish leapt up in the net.'

Ah, you dance now when I play,' said he.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "When you are in a man's power you must do as he bids you".



Dog and Shadow

Once upon a time it happened that a Dog had got a piece of meat and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat it in peace.

Now on his way home he had to cross a plank lying across a running brook.

As he crossed, he looked down and saw his own shadow reflected in the water beneath.

Thinking it was another dog with another piece of meat, he made up his mind to have that also.

So he made a snap at the shadow in the water, but as he opened his mouth the piece of meat fell out, dropped into the water and was never seen again.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Beware lest you lose the substance by grasping at the shadow”.

Dog and Wolf

Once upon a time a gaunt Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by.

‘Ah, Cousin,’ said the Dog, ‘I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you.’

Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?’

‘I would have no objection,’ said the Wolf, ‘if I could only get a place.’

‘I will easily arrange that for you,’ said the Dog; ‘come with me to my master and you shall share my work.’

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together.

On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog’s neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

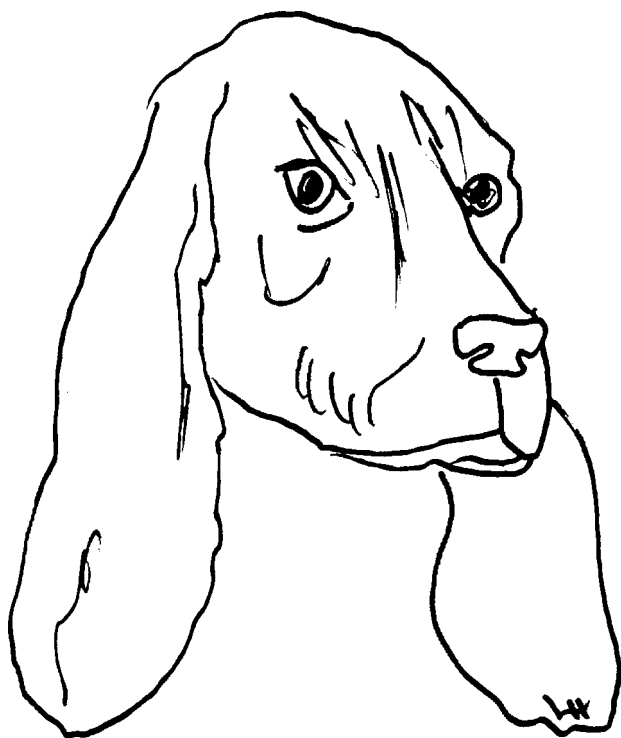
‘Oh, it is nothing,’ said the Dog, ‘That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me

chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it.'

'Is that all?' said the Wolf, 'Then good-bye to you, Master Dog.'

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "Better starve while free than be a fat slave".



Dog in the Manger

Once upon a time, a Dog, desiring an afternoon nap, jumped into the Manger of an Ox and lay there cosily upon the straw.

But soon the Ox, returning from its afternoon work, came up to the Manger and wanted to eat some of the straw.

The Dog in a rage, being awakened from its slumber, stood up and barked at the Ox, and whenever it came near attempted to bite it.

At last the Ox had to give up the hope of getting at the straw, and went away.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “ People often begrudge others what they cannot enjoy themselves”.

Eagle and the Arrow

Once upon a time an Eagle was soaring through the air when suddenly it heard the whizz of an Arrow, and felt itself wounded to death.

Slowly it fluttered down to the earth, with its lifeblood pouring out of it.

Looking down upon the Arrow with which it had been pierced, it found that the shaft of the Arrow had been feathered with one of its own plumes.

‘Alas!’ it cried, as it died.

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “We often give our enemies the means for our own destruction.”



Fable of the Milk-Jug

Once upon a time there was a wise old miser living in a mountain cave behind a waterfall.

As he neared the end of his life, he sent word into the nearby town that whoever could carry a clean milk-milk-jug under the waterfall without getting water in it would have his milk-jug filled with gold.

The next day, many townsfolk lined up at the waterfall with their milk-jugs.

Many carried them in bags, but as the miser could not see their milk-jugs as they came through the waterfall, they got no gold.

Others covered their jugs with covers, but a covered milk-jug can receive no gold either.

Still others carried their milk-jugs upside-down.

But an upside-down milk-jug cannot be filled.

One smart person had filled his milk-jug with water and frozen it overnight so that no water from the waterfall could get into the jug.

But a milk-jug filled with frozen water could hold no gold either.

Another filled his milk-jug with axle-grease to prevent the water getting in, but then his milk-jug was no longer clean.

However, one person had filled his milk-jug with honey.

When he came through the waterfall, no water could enter the milk-jug.

When the miser poured in the gold, the clean sweet honey overflowed and was shared with and enjoyed by the gathered townsfolk.

And the moral of the story is, “When we are filled with sweetness there is no room for anything undesirable, and as we share the sweetness it is replaced by a greater treasure.

— Lionel Hartley

Fig Tree

Once upon a time “a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7) Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8) And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9) And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” (Luke 13:6-9)

And the moral of the story is that people who claim to be Christians but never do anything for Christ are like the fig tree that has no fruit. They are Christians in name only, because their faith isn't demonstrated as they don't show Jesus' love in the way they live.

Fisherman's Net

Once upon a time Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48) Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49) So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”
(Matthew 13:47-50)

And the moral of the story is that it is not our place to judge, but to tell as many people about the gospel as possible. The nets represent our efforts to spread the gospel. That's our rôle. Filling the net is up to God. In the final judgement, He will know which people have accepted His sacrifice and which people have truly rejected the gift of salvation.”

Four Oxen and the Lion

Once upon a time a Lion used to prowl about a field in which Four Oxen used to dwell.

Many a time he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them.

At last, however, they fell a-quarrelling among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field.

Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

And the moral of the story is, “United we stand; divided we fall”.

Fox and Crow

Once upon a time a Fox saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree.

‘That’s for me, as I am a Fox,’ said Master Fox, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

‘Good-day, Mistress Crow,’ he cried. ‘How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds.’

The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox.

‘That will do,’ said he. ‘That was all I wanted.’

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Do not trust flatterers”.

Fox and Grapes

Once upon a time, on a hot summer's day, a Fox was strolling through an orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch.'

Just the thing to quench my thirst,' quoth he.

Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch.

Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success.

Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: 'I am sure they are sour.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "It is easy to despise what you cannot get".

(Song of Songs 2:15) "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

Fox and Lion

Once upon a time when the Fox first saw the Lion King he was terribly frightened, and ran away and hid himself in the wood.

Next time however he came near the King of Beasts he stopped at a safe distance and watched him pass by.

The third time they came near one another the Fox went straight up to the Lion King and passed the time of day with him, asking him how his family were, and when he should have the pleasure of seeing him again; then turning his tail, he parted from the Lion King without much ceremony.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Familiarity breeds contempt”.

Fox and Stork

Once upon a time the Fox and the Stork were on visiting terms and seemed very good friends.

So the Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and for a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish.

This the Fox could easily lap up, but the Stork could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as hungry as when she began.'

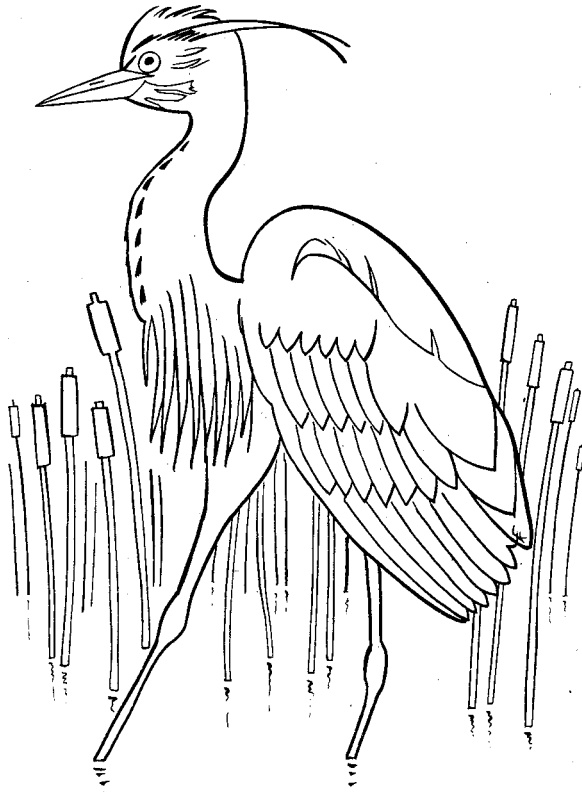
I am sorry,' said the Fox, 'the soup is not to your liking.'

'Pray do not apologise,' said the Stork. 'I hope you will return this visit, and come and dine with me soon.'

So a day was appointed when the Fox should visit the Stork; but when they were seated at table all that was for their dinner was contained in a very long-necked jar with a narrow mouth, in which the Fox could not insert his snout, so all he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Revenge is when one bad turn deserves another”.



Fox and the Cat

Once upon a time a Fox was boasting to a Cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies.

‘I have a whole bag of tricks,’ he said, ‘which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies.’

‘I have only one,’ said the Cat, ‘but I can generally manage with that.’

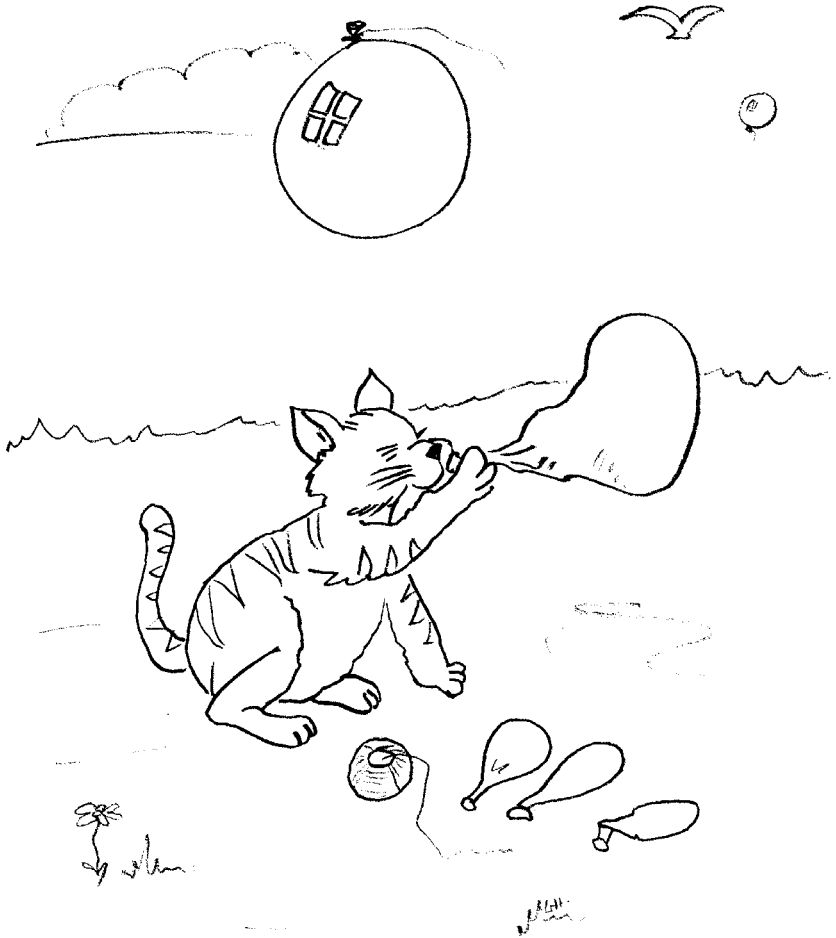
Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the Cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid herself in the boughs.

‘This is my plan,’ said the Cat, ‘What are you going to do?’

The Fox thought first of one way, then of another, and while he was debating the hounds came nearer and nearer, and at last the Fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Better one safe way than an hundred on which you cannot reckon”.



Fox and the Goat

Once upon a time, by an unlucky chance, a Fox fell into a deep well from which he could not get out.

A Goat passed by shortly afterwards, and asked the Fox what he was doing down there.'

Oh, have you not heard?' said the Fox; 'there is going to be a great drought, so I jumped down here in order to be sure to have water by me. Why don't you come down too?'

The Goat thought well of this advice, and jumped down into the well.

But the Fox immediately jumped on her back, and by putting his foot on her long horns managed to jump up to the edge of the well.'

Good-bye, friend,' said the Fox.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "Never trust the advice of a man in difficulties".

Fox and the Mask

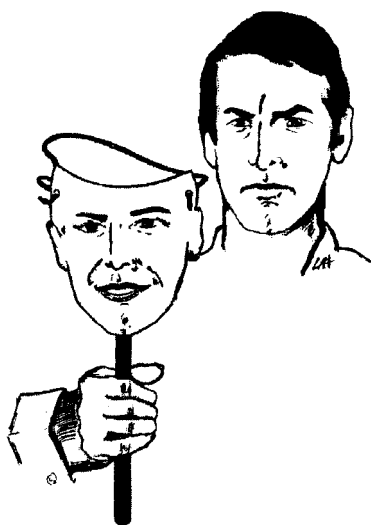
Once upon a time a Fox had, by some means, got into the storeroom of a theatre.

Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a Mask such as actors use to put over their face.'

Ah,' said the Fox, 'you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth".



Fox and the Mosquitoes

Once upon a time a Fox, after crossing a river, got its tail entangled in a bush, and could not move.

A number of Mosquitoes seeing its plight settled upon it and enjoyed a good meal undisturbed by its tail.

A hedgehog strolling by took pity upon the Fox and went up to him: ‘You are in a bad way, neighbour,’ said the hedgehog; ‘shall I relieve you by driving off those Mosquitoes who are sucking your blood?’

‘Thank you, Master Hedgehog,’ said the Fox, ‘but I would rather not.’

‘Why, how is that?’ asked the hedgehog.

‘Well, you see,’ was the answer, ‘these Mosquitoes have had their fill; if you drive these away, others will come with fresh appetite and bleed me to death.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44) Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45) Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” (Matthew 12:43-45)

Fox Without a Tail

Once upon a time it happened that a Fox caught its tail in a trap, and in struggling to release himself lost all of it but the stump.

At first he was ashamed to show himself among his fellow foxes.

But at last he determined to put a bolder face upon his misfortune, and summoned all the foxes to a general meeting to consider a proposal which he had to place before them.

When they had assembled together the Fox proposed that they should all do away with their tails.

He pointed out how inconvenient a tail was when they were pursued by their enemies, the dogs; how much it was in the way when they desired to sit down and hold a friendly conversation with one another.

He failed to see any advantage in carrying about such a useless encumbrance.'

That is all very well,' said one of the older foxes; 'but I do not think you would have recommended us to dispense with our chief ornament if you had not

happened to lose it yourself.’

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Distrust interested advice”.

Fox, the Cock, and the Dog

Once upon a time on a moonlight night, a Fox was prowling about a farmer's hen-coop, and saw a Cock roosting high up beyond his reach.

‘Good news, good news!’ he cried.

‘Why, what is that?’ said the Cock.

‘King Lion has declared a universal truce. No beast may hurt a bird henceforth, but all shall dwell together in brotherly friendship.’

‘Why, that is good news,’ said the Cock; ‘and there I see some one coming, with whom we can share the good tidings.’

And so saying he craned his neck forward and looked afar off.’\

‘What is it you see?’ said the Fox.

‘It is only my master's Dog that is coming towards us.’

‘What, going so soon?’ he continued, as the Fox began to turn away as soon as he had heard the news.

‘Will you not stop and congratulate the Dog on the reign of universal peace?’

‘I would gladly do so,’ said the Fox, ‘but I fear he may not have heard of King Lion’s decree.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Cunning often outwits itself”.

Frog and Ox

Once upon a time a little Frog said to a big one sitting by the side of a pool, ‘Oh Father Frog, I have seen such a terrible monster! It was as big as a mountain, with horns on its head, and a long tail, and it had hoofs divided in two.’

‘Tush, child, tush,’ said the old Frog, ‘that was only Farmer White’s Ox. It isn’t so big either; he may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself quite as broad; just you see.’

So he blew himself out, and blew himself out, and blew himself out.

‘Was he as big as that?’ asked he.

‘Oh, much bigger than that,’ said the young Frog.

Again the old one blew himself out, and asked the young one if the Ox was as big as that.

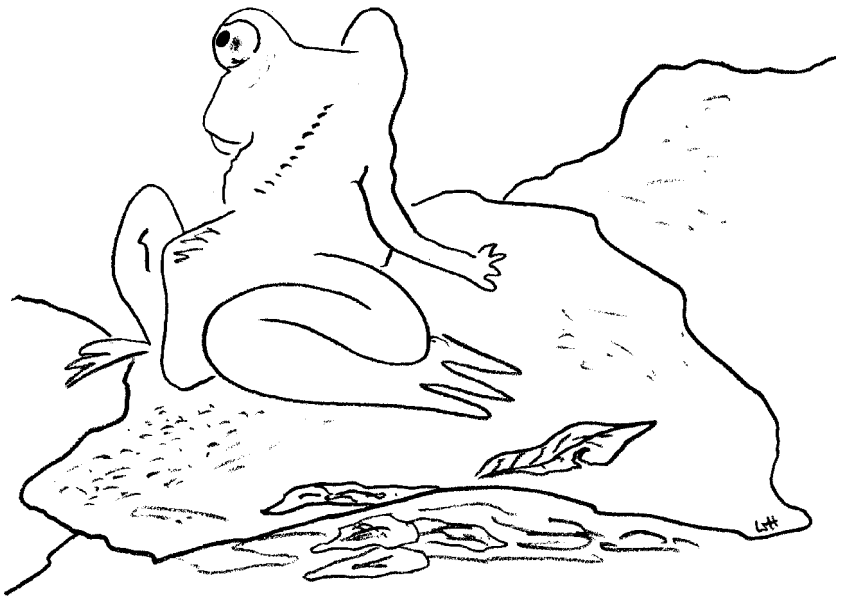
‘Bigger, father, bigger,’ was the reply.

So the Frog took a deep breath, and blew and blew and blew, and swelled and swelled and swelled.

And then he said: ‘I’m sure the Ox is not as big as...’ But at this moment he burst.

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction”.



Frogs Desiring a King

Once upon a time the Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that just suited them.

They went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them.

But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted.

‘Mighty Jove,’ they cried, ‘send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order.’

Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge Log, which came down splash into the swamp.

The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did not move.

Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the

Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst.

But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him, ‘We want a real king; one that will really rule over us.’

Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up.

Then the Frogs repented when too late.

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Better no rule than cruel rule”.

Getting Rid of the Truth

Once upon a time a there was a young man who was considered a science prodigy.

While at his classes in an English academy, he was given a powerful microscope as a scholarship gift.

Looking through its lens, he studied raindrops, flower petals and snow crystals.

Stunned by the beauty and uniformity, he carried the microscope everywhere he went.

When he arrived at home, he inspected a chunk of gravel, a piece of handkerchief and a sample of carpet.

That night at dinner, he examined some food on his plate.

He was shocked when he discovered that miniscule living creatures were crawling in it.

Not only was it in his favourite entree, it was also in his drink and dessert! So upset was he by this discovery that he concluded that it must be the microscope's fault.

Taking a hammer, he destroyed the instrument that revealed the distasteful truth.

We might laugh at the stupidity of this decision; after all, the creatures were still there.

And the moral of the story is that many people react the same way with the Word of God as it reveals their sinful nature.

They want to rid themselves of the truth, rather than the sin.

Good Samaritan

Once upon a time Jesus said, “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31) And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32) And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33) But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35) And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36) Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37) And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.” (Luke 10:30-37)

And the moral of the story is, “It is important to show mercy and compassion to all people, regardless of their background or circumstances.

We encounter people from various backgrounds and situations daily, and like the Samaritan, we have the opportunity to extend kindness and help those in need, regardless of their identity or how they differ from us.”



Goose With the Golden Eggs

Once upon a time a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering.

When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him.

But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold.

Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs.

As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Greed oft o’er reaches itself”.

Great Eagles and the Vine

Spoken by Ezekiel at Babylon concerning Nebuchadnezzar, so called from his towering ambition and rapaciousness.

“... Say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, long-winged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: 4) He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffic; he set it in a city of merchants. 5) He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree. 6) And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs. 7) There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. 8) It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. 9) Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD;

Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. 10) Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew” (Ezekiel 17:3-10).

(See also Ezekiel 17:7,12-21, Deuteronomy 28:49, Jeremiah 4:13, 48:40, 49:16, Lamentations 4:19, Hosea 8:1 and Matthew 24:28)

And the moral of the story is, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Growing Seed

Once upon a time Jesus said, “Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25) For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. 26) And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; 27) And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29) But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” (Mark 4:24-29)

And the moral of the story is that as God’s Word is being sown, how and how much it grows within a person is a mystery. But as soon as they are spiritually ready, they will come to the point of true salvation and fruitfulness. This is an encouragement to us to continue spreading the Gospel as we do not know what is happening within a person. Keep labouring for the Kingdom of God as you never know who will come to repentance one day.

Hares and Frogs

Once upon a time the Hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go.

As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, they used to run away.

One day they saw a troop of wild Horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic all the Hares scuttled off to a lake nearby, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear.

But just as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of Frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the Hares scuttled off, and jumped into the water.'

Truly,' said one of the Hares, 'things are not so bad as they seem.'

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "There is always someone worse off than yourself".

In my mother's words, "I grieved because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet."

Hart and Hunter

Once upon a time the Hart was drinking from a pool and admiring the noble figure he made there.'

Ah,' said he, 'where can you see such noble horns as these, with such antlers! I wish I had legs more worthy to bear such a noble crown; it is a pity they are so slim and slight.' At that moment a Hunter approached and sent an arrow whistling after him.

Away bounded the Hart, and soon, by the aid of his nimble legs, was nearly out of sight of the Hunter; but not noticing where he was going, he passed under some trees with branches growing low down in which his antlers were caught, so that the Hunter had time to come up.'

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, "We often despise what is most useful to us".

Hart in the Ox-Stall

Once upon a time a Hart, hotly pursued by the hounds, fled for refuge into an ox-stall, and buried itself in a truss of hay, leaving nothing to be seen but the tips of his horns.

Soon after the Hunters came up and asked if any one had seen the Hart.

The stable boys, who had been resting after their dinner, looked round, but could see nothing, and the Hunters went away.

Shortly afterwards the master came in, and looking round, saw that something unusual had taken place.

He pointed to the truss of hay and said: ‘What are those two curious things sticking out of the hay?’ And when the stable boys came to look they discovered the Hart, and soon made an end of him.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Nothing escapes the master’s eye”.

Have You No Grains?

Once upon a time Martin Luther was told of a nobleman who, above all things, occupied himself with amassing money and was so buried in darkness that he gave no heed to the word of God, and even said to someone who witnessed to him, “But the gospel pays no interest.”

“Have you no grains?” interposed Luther.

And then he told this fable.

“A lion was making a great feast, and invited all the beasts, among them some swine.

When all types of dainty foods were set before the guests, the swine asked, ‘Have you no grains?’ It is the same way with carnal men today,” Luther continued.

“We preachers set before them the most dainty and costly dishes, such as everlasting salvation, the remission of sins, and God’s grace. But they, like swine, turn up their snouts, and ask for money.

And Luther’s moral of the story is, “Offer a cow a nutmeg, and she will reject it for old hay.”

Hercules and the Waggoner

Once upon a time a Waggoner was once driving a heavy load along a very muddy way.

At last he came to a part of the road where the wheels sank half-way into the mire, and the more the horses pulled, the deeper sank the wheels.

So the Waggoner threw down his whip, and knelt down and prayed to Hercules the Strong.

‘O Hercules, help me in this my hour of distress,’ quoth he.

But Hercules appeared to him, and said: ‘Tut, man, don’t sprawl there. Get up and put your shoulder to the wheel.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “The gods help those who help themselves. The true God helps those who can’t help themselves”

Horse and the Ass

Once upon a time a Horse and an Ass were travelling together, the Horse prancing along in its fine trappings, the Ass carrying with difficulty the heavy weight in its panniers.

‘I wish I were you,’ sighed the Ass; ‘nothing to do and well fed, and all that fine harness upon you.’

Next day, however, there was a great battle, and the Horse was wounded to death in the final charge of the day.

His friend, the Ass, happened to pass by shortly afterwards and found him on the point of death.

‘I was wrong,’ said the Ass

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Better humble security than gilded danger”.

Horse, Hunter and Stag

Once upon a time a quarrel had arisen between the Horse and the Stag, so the Horse came to a Hunter to ask his help to take revenge on the Stag.

The Hunter agreed, but said: ‘If you desire to conquer the Stag, you must permit me to place this piece of iron between your jaws, so that I may guide you with these reins, and allow this saddle to be placed upon your back so that I may keep steady upon you as we follow after the enemy.’

The Horse agreed to the conditions, and the Hunter soon saddled and bridled him.

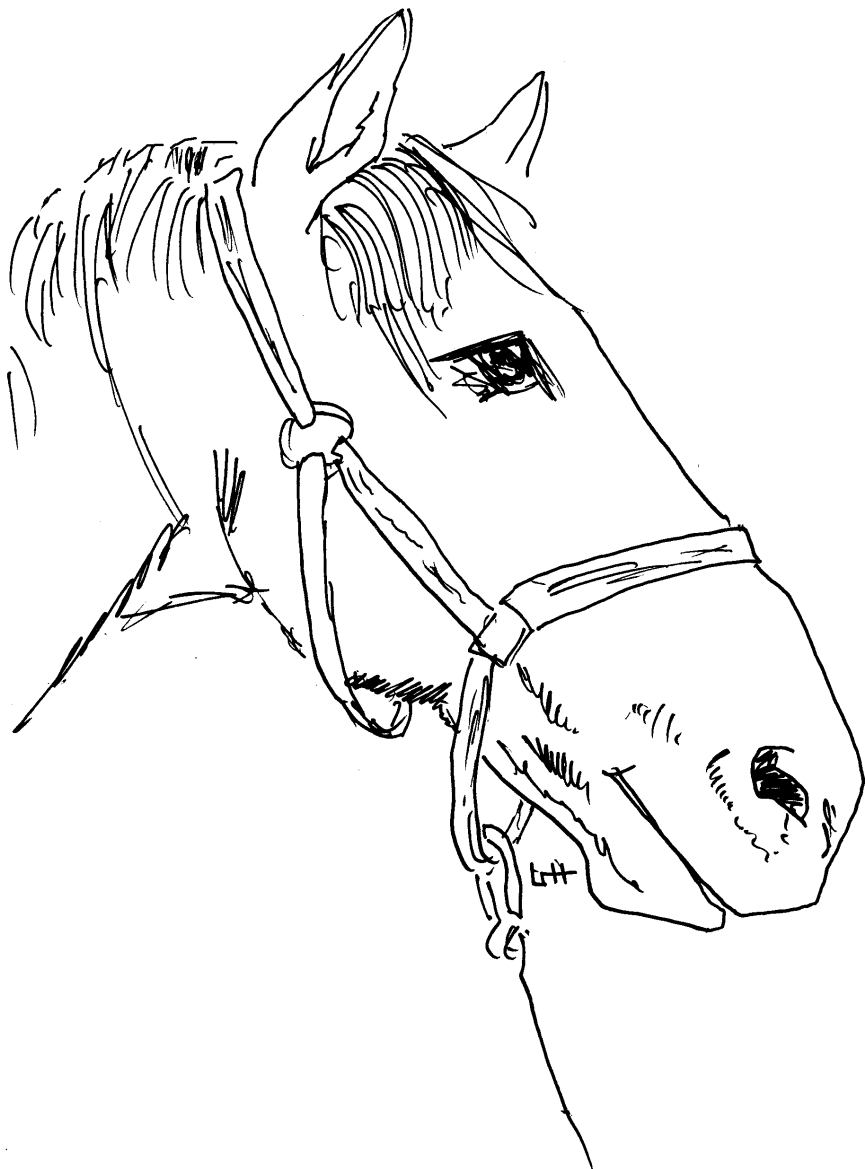
Then with the aid of the Hunter the Horse soon overcame the Stag, and said to the Hunter: ‘Now, get off, and remove those things from my mouth and back.’

‘Not so fast, friend,’ said the Hunter.

‘I have now got you under bit and spur, and prefer to keep you as you are at present.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “If you allow men to use you for your own purposes, they will use you for theirs”.



How Long Halt Ye

Once upon a time a hungry ass was put between two bundles of hay.

It looked at the one, then at the other, and could not decide which to eat first, till it died of starvation.

Just about as stupid and foolish are those who halt between two opinions till they die in their sins.

And the moral of the story is, "... How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21).

Jay and the Peacock

Once upon a time a Jay venturing into a yard where Peacocks used to walk, found there a number of feathers which had fallen from the Peacocks when they were moulting.

He tied them all to his tail and strutted down towards the Peacocks.

When he came near them they soon discovered the cheat, and striding up to him pecked at him and plucked away his borrowed plumes.

So the Jay could do no better than go back to the other Jays, who had watched his behaviour from a distance.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “It takes more than fine feathers to make fine birds.’

Juno and the Peacock

Once upon a time a Peacock placed a petition before Juno desiring to have the voice of a nightingale in addition to his other attractions; but Juno refused his request.

When he persisted, Juno pointed out that he was her favourite bird

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Be content with your lot; one cannot be first in everything”.

Labourer and the Nightingale

Once upon a time a Labourer lay listening to a Nightingale's song throughout the summer night.

So pleased was he with it that the next night he set a trap for it and captured it.

‘Now that I have caught thee,’ he cried, ‘thou shalt always sing to me.’

‘We Nightingales never sing in a cage.’ said the bird.

‘Then I'll eat thee.’ said the Labourer. ‘I have always heard say that a nightingale on toast is dainty morsel.’

‘Nay, kill me not,’ said the Nightingale; ‘but let me free, and I'll tell thee three things far better worth than my poor body.’

The Labourer let him loose, and he flew up to a branch of a tree and said: ‘Never believe a captive's promise; that's one thing.

Then again: Keep what you have.

And third piece of advice is: Sorrow not over what is lost forever.’

Then the song-bird flew away.

—Aesop's Fables

Leaven of the Spirit

Lord, You are the bread of life.

Make me, Lord, a slice of thee;

May life for me be Spirit filled –

The leaven swelling up in me.

The silent unseen working

Transforming lazy flour

Into holy - air filled bubbling life;

Risen, baked, and given power!

So life no longer is a loaf

Of wasted energy.

Lord, may the crumbs I leave behind,

Draw other souls to thee.

— Lionel Hartley

Letting the Camel In

The Arabs have a fable of a miller who **Once upon a time** was startled by a camel's nose thrust in the window of the room where he was sleeping.

"It is very cold outside," said the camel, "I only want to get my nose in."

The nose was let in, then the neck, and finally the whole body.

Presently the miller began to be extremely inconvenienced at the ungainly companion he had obtained in a room certainly not big enough for both.

"If you are inconvenienced, you may leave," said the camel.

"As for myself, I shall stay where I am."

There are many such camels knocking at the human heart.

A single worldly custom becomes the nose of the camel, and it is not long before the entire body follows.

The Christian then finds his heart occupied by a vice that a little while before peeped in so meekly.

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon

And the moral of the story is, “When sin is let in as a beggar, it remains in as a tyrant”.



Light Under a Bowl

Once upon a time Jesus "...said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? 22) For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. 23) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24) And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25) For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath." (Mark 4:21-25)

And the moral of the story is, "Once we have an understanding of God's love for us, we recognise that it's meant for sharing. And we can share the gospel by doing good things in our everyday lives and bringing glory to God."

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

Lion and Mouse

Once upon a time when a Lion was asleep, a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him.

‘Pardon, O King,’ cried the little Mouse: ‘forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?’

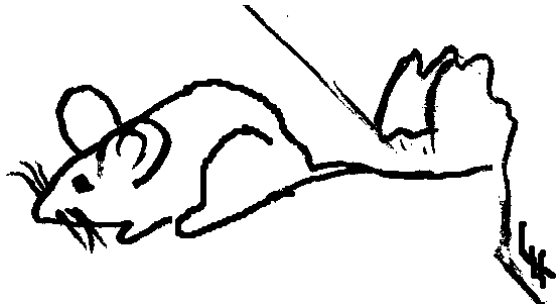
The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go.

Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on.

Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts.

‘Was I not right?’ said the little Mouse.

And the moral of the story is, “Little friends may prove great friends”.



Lion and the Statue

Once upon a time a Man and a Lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general.

The Man contended that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence.

‘Come now with me,’ he cried, ‘and I will soon prove that I am right.’

So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the Lion and tearing his mouth in two.

‘That is all very well,’ said the Lion, ‘but proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue.’

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “We can easily represent things as we wish them to be”.

Lion in Love

Once upon a time a Lion once fell in love with a beautiful maiden and proposed marriage to her parents.

The old people did not know what to say.

They did not like to give their daughter to the Lion, yet they did not wish to enrage the King of Beasts.

At last the father said: ‘We feel highly honoured by your Majesty’s proposal, but you see our daughter is a tender young thing, and we fear that in the vehemence of your affection you might possibly do her some injury.

Might I venture to suggest that your Majesty should have your claws removed, and your teeth extracted, then we would gladly consider your proposal again.’

The Lion was so much in love that he had his claws trimmed and his big teeth taken out.

But when he came again to the parents of the young girl they simply laughed in his face, and bade him do his worst.

And the moral of the story is, “Love can tame the wildest beast”.



Lion's Share

Once upon a time the Lion went once a-hunting along with the Fox, the Jackal, and the Wolf.

They hunted and they hunted till at last they surprised a Stag, and soon took its life.

Then came the question how the spoil should be divided.

‘Quarter me this Stag,’ roared the Lion; so the other animals skinned it and cut it into four parts.

Then the Lion took his stand in front of the carcass and pronounced judgment: The first quarter is for me in my capacity as King of Beasts; the second is mine as arbiter; another share comes to me for my part in the chase; and as for the fourth quarter, well, as for that, I should like to see which of you will dare to lay a paw upon it.’

‘Humph,’ grumbled the Fox as he walked away with his tail between his legs.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “You may share the labours of the great, but you will not share the spoil”.

Lion's Whelps

Once upon a time these words were spoken by Ezekiel at Babylon concerning a lion's whelps, "And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. 3) And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. 4) The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt. 5) Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion. 6) And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men. 7) And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring. 8) Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit. 9) And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel."

And the moral of the story is, “...Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” (Revelation 14:8)



Little Fish in the Hand

Once upon a time it happened that a Fisher, after fishing all day, caught only a little fish.

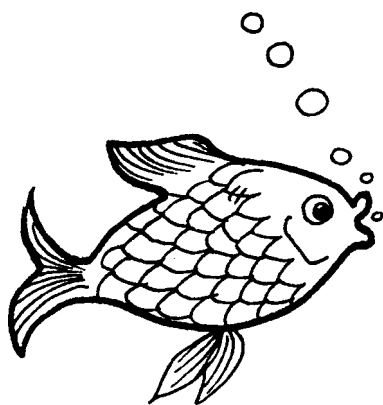
‘Pray, let me go, master,’ said the Fish. ‘I am much too small for your eating just now.

If you put me back into the river I shall soon grow, then you can make a fine meal off me.’

‘Nay, nay, my little Fish,’ said the Fisher, ‘I have you now. I may not catch you hereafter.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “A little thing in hand is worth more than a great thing in prospect.”.



Lost Sheep

Once upon a time Jesus said, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. 11) For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. 12) How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13) And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14) Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” (Matthew 18:10-14)

And the moral of the story is, “God places immense value on every individual, including you and me.”



Malignant Jealousy

Once upon a time the devil was crossing the African desert when he came across a group of small devils who were tempting a holy hermit.

They tried him with the seductions of the flesh, all to no avail, then they began to sow doubts and fear in his mind, but the holy man stood firm.

As a last resort they surrounded him with creature comforts and told him that his austerities were only a waste of time.

But the hermit would not be moved.

The devil stepped forward and drew his assistants aside.

He told them their methods would never succeed.

“Just watch me,” he said.

Coming up to the hermit he said, “Have you heard the news? Your brother has been made Bishop of Alexandria.”

The fable says that on hearing this, a scowl of

malignant jealousy clouded the serene face of the holy man.

And the moral of the story is, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

Milkmaid and Her Pail

Once upon a time Patty the Milkmaid was going to market carrying her milk in a Pail on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk.

‘I’ll buy some fowls from Farmer Brown,’ said she, ‘and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson’s wife.

With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I’ll buy myself a new dimity frock and a chip hat; and when I go to market, won’t all the young men come up and speak to me! Polly Shaw will be that jealous; but I don’t care. I shall just look at her and toss my head like this.

As she spoke she tossed her head back, the Pail fell off it, and all the milk was spilt.

So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Do not count your chickens before they are hatched”.

Miser and His Gold

Once upon a time there was a Miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains.

A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and departed with it.

When the Miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole.

He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbours came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold.

‘Did you ever take any of it out?’ asked one of them.

‘Nay,’ said he, ‘I only came to look at it.’

‘Then come again and look at the hole,’ said a neighbour; ‘it will do you just as much good.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Wealth unused might just as well not exist”.

Moabites and Israelites

Once upon a time Balaam at Mount Pisgah prophesied concerning the Moabites and Israelites said these words, “Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.” (Numbers 23:24)

And the moral of the story is found in Numbers 24, verse 9, “He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.”

Motivation

Once upon a time there was a dog who loved to chase other animals.

He bragged about his great running skill and said he could catch anything.

Well, it wasn't long until his boastful claims were put to the test by a certain rabbit.

With ease the little creature outran his barking pursuer.

The other animals, watching with glee, began to laugh.

The dog excused himself, however, by saying, "You forget, I was only running for fun.

He was running for his life!" That does make a difference!

And the moral of the story is that motivation is the most important factor in everything we do.

Mountains in Labour

Once upon a time the Countrymen noticed that the Mountains were in labour; smoke came out of their summits, the earth was quaking at their feet, trees were crashing, and huge rocks were tumbling.

They felt sure that something horrible was going to happen.

They all gathered together in one place to see what terrible thing this could be.

They waited and they waited, but nothing came.

At last there was a still more violent earthquake, and a huge gap appeared in the side of the Mountains.

They all fell down upon their knees and waited.

At last, and at last, a teeny, tiny mouse poked its little head and bristles out of the gap and came running down towards them.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Much outcry, little outcome”.

Mustard Seed

Once upon a time Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32) Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” (Matthew 13:31-32)

And the moral of the story is that the Kingdom of God started out small with Jesus and his 12 disciples, but it has and will continue to grow into a large kingdom that will spread across the world.

Like the birds who came and made nests in the branches of the mustard tree, anyone who is a part of the Kingdom will benefit. Zechariah 4:10 says to not despise humble beginnings because the Lord rejoices to see the work begin. We are not to underestimate the power of what the world sees as small starting points.

New Cloth

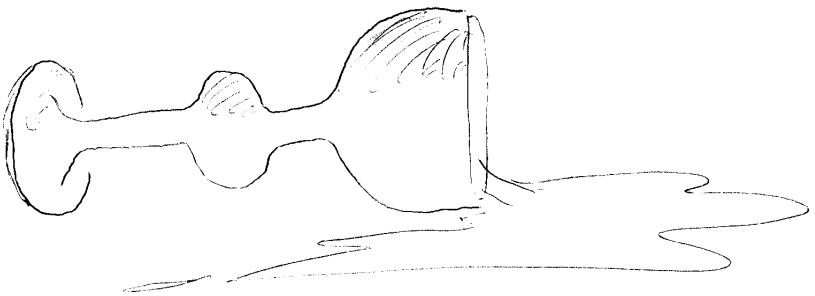
Once upon a time Jesus said, “No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.” (Matthew 9:16)

And the moral of the story is that the new cloth, in this parable, represents the gospel. The old cloth is our old way of living. It doesn't make sense to mix the two, as the old cloth would ruin the new garment. It is better to let Jesus take the old things in our lives that have been a burden for so long and replace them with His way of living.

New Wine, Old Wineskins

Once upon a time Jesus also said, “Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:17)

And the moral of the story is that using an old way of thinking to do something new doesn't always work. In fact, the two can be incompatible and result in failure.



Nurse and Wolf

Once upon a time an old Nurse said to a child sitting on her lap, ‘Be quiet now.

If you make that noise again I will throw you to the Wolf.’

Now it chanced that a Wolf was passing close under the window as this was said.

So he crouched down by the side of the house and waited.

‘I am in good luck to-day,’ thought he. ‘It is sure to cry soon, and a daintier morsel I haven’t had for many a long day.’

So he waited, and he waited, and he waited, till at last the child began to cry, and the Wolf came forward before the window, and looked up to the Nurse, wagging his tail.

But all the Nurse did was to shut the window and call for help. The dogs of the house came rushing out and the Wolf ran away,

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Enemies promises were made to be broken”.



Old Man and Death

Once upon a time an old labourer, bent double with age and toil, was gathering sticks in a forest.

At last he grew so tired and hopeless that he threw down the bundle of sticks, and cried out: ‘I cannot bear this life any longer. Ah, I wish Death would only come and take me!’

As he spoke, Death, a grisly skeleton, appeared and said to him: ‘What wouldst thou, Mortal? I heard thee call me.’

‘Please, sir,’ replied the woodcutter, ‘Would you kindly help me to lift this faggot of sticks on to my shoulder?’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Be careful what you wish for; we would often be sorry if our wishes were gratified”.

Old Woman and the Wine-Jar

You must know that sometimes old women like to drink a glass of wine.

One of this sort once found a Wine-jar lying in the road, and eagerly went up to it hoping to find it full.

But when she took it up she found that all the wine had been drunk out of it.

Nevertheless, she took a long sniff at the mouth of the Jar.

—Aesop's Fables

And Aesop's moral to this story is, “What memories cling ‘round the instruments of our pleasure”.

One-Eyed Doe

(better than a ‘no-eye-deer’)

Once upon a time a Doe had the misfortune to lose one of her eyes, and could not see any one approaching her on that side. So to avoid any danger she always used to feed on a high cliff near the sea, with her sound eye looking towards the land. By this means she could see whenever the hunters approached her on land, and often escaped by this means. But the hunters found out that she was blind in one eye, and hiring a boat rowed under the cliff where she used to feed and shot her from the sea. — Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “You cannot escape your fate”.

Only One Person's Voice

Once upon a time a sparrow asked a wild dove, "Tell me the weight of a snowflake".

"Nothing more than nothing," was the answer.

"In that case, I must tell you a marvellous story," the sparrow said. "I sat on the branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow, not heavily, not in a raging blizzard, no, just like in a dream, without a sound, and without any violence.

Since I did not have anything better to do, I counted the snowflakes settling on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952. When the 3,741,953rd dropped onto the branch, nothing more than nothing, as you say, the branch broke off."

Having said that, the sparrow flew away. The dove, since Noah's time an authority on the matter, thought about the story for awhile, and finally said to herself **the moral of the story**, "Perhaps only one person's voice is lacking for peace to come to the world."

Pearl of Great Price

Once upon a time Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46) Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45-46)

And the moral of the story highlights the great value of obtaining the Kingdom of God. Those who have been searching for the truth and have finally found it are willing to give up everything they have in order to follow it. Everything else palls in significance compared to finding Jesus.

Phoenix

Once upon a time when Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians about the resurrection, he chose the fable of the phoenix bird.

The phoenix was an Arabian bird, the only one of its kind.

It lived for one hundred years. When the time of death was near, it built a nest of spices, including frankincense and myrrh, entered the nest, and died. In the decay of its flesh a worm was produced, nourished by the dead body of the bird.

The worm grew feathers and became strong enough to fly. It then carried the bones of its parent to Heliopolis in Egypt.

And the moral of the story is that we need to be transformed through a new birth.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be

born? 5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:3-7)

And, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter 1:23)

Refusing Help

Once upon a time a religious man was caught in a flood.

As the rising waters surround his house he kneels in prayer assured that the Lord will save him, As the water get higher he resorts to climbing on top of his roof, as he continues to pray.

Calling out to him in attempts to save him, two men a rowboat pass by.

But he declines their help and calls out that the Lord will save him.

As the waters gradually reaches his waist a motorboat passes by with another offer of help.

Again the man calls out “the Lord will save me.”

A National Guard helicopter finally flies over dropping a rope ladder.

Now the waters have risen to the man’s neck but instead of panicking he calls “ the Lord will save me.”

Suddenly the man’s head is submerged under water

and he drowns.

When reaching heaven he questioned the Lord.

“Why did you not save me when you saw I was drowning?” I have complete faith in you and you let me down.”

“I didn’t let you down, replied the Lord. “I sent you a rowboat. Then I sent you a motorboat and finally a helicopter. Why did you refuse their help?

And the moral of the story is, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7)

And, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Luke 11:9)

And, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:24)

Royal Nudity

Once upon a time there was a king who was preparing for a great parade before his subjects.

He ordered his tailor to prepare him a magnificent suit.

This troubled the tailor for he had no fine fabrics.

So he devised a story for the king about a magic cloth only the wisest could see.

The king ‘saw’ it for he was the wisest of the wise.

So a proclamation was made to the people telling them of the special suit that was made.

The day of the parade came, and there went the king down the main street naked as the day he was born.

Yet the people remarked one to another about what a wondrous suit the king was wearing, for only a fool could not see the suit, and none wanted to be a fool, so none could admit the truth.

Finally, a small boy, still in the simple innocence of childhood, said, “The king is naked”.

— Hans Christian Andersen, 1837.

And the moral of the story is the reminder of the dangers of vanity and the importance of integrity, how pride can cloud judgment and how fear of being perceived as foolish can prevent individuals from speaking up and telling the truth.

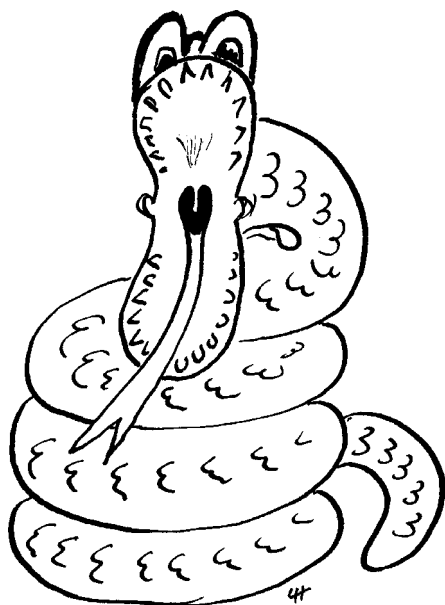
Serpent and the File

Once upon a time a Serpent in the course of its wanderings came into an armourer's shop.

As he glided over the floor he felt his skin pricked by a file lying there.

In a rage he turned round upon it and tried to dart his fangs into it; but he could do no harm to heavy iron and had soon to give over his wrath.

And the moral of the story is that it is useless attacking the insensible.



Sick Lion

Once upon a time a Lion had come to the end of his days and lay sick unto death at the mouth of his cave, gasping for breath.

The animals, his subjects, came round him and drew nearer as he grew more and more helpless.

When they saw him on the point of death they thought to themselves: ‘Now is the time to pay off old grudges.’

So the Boar came up and drove at him with his tusks; then a Bull gored him with his horns; still the Lion lay helpless before them: so the Ass, feeling quite safe from danger, came up, and turning his tail to the Lion kicked up his heels into his face.

‘This is a double death,’ growled the Lion.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is that only cowards insult dying majesty.

Six Blind Men and the Elephant

Once upon a time the American poet John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) wrote a poem based on a fable that was told in India many years ago. Here is the poem:

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind

The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:”
God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!”

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, “Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me ‘tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!”

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:”
I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant
Is very like a snake!”

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.”
What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,” quoth he;”
‘Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!”

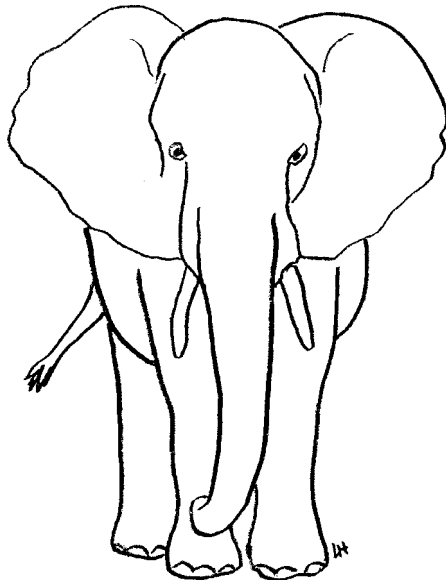
The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: “E’en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!”

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,”
I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant

Is very like a rope!”

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!



Slow and Steady Wins the Race

Once upon a time a Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals.

‘I have never yet been beaten,’ said he, ‘when I put forth my full speed.

I challenge any one here to race with me.’

The Tortoise said quietly, ‘I accept your challenge.’

‘That is a good joke,’ said the Hare; ‘I could dance round you all the way.’

‘Keep your boasting till you’ve beaten,’ answered the Tortoise.

‘Shall we race?’ So a course was fixed and a start was made.

The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap.

The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to

save the race.

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Slow and steady wins the race”.



Sower

Once upon a time, “Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2) And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3) And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4) And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5) Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7) And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8) But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10) And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11) He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12) For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall

be taken away even that he hath. 13) Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15) For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17) For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. 18) Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19) When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20) But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21) Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth

because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22) He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23) But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:1-23)

And the moral of the story is the seeds that fall on the side of the road get eaten by birds represent people who do not try to understand spiritual concepts. Like the birds, Satan snatches the truth from them.

The seeds on rocky soil refer to people who hear the gospel and get caught up in the excitement, but they do not continue to study or maintain their relationship with God. So their faith withers away.

Seeds that fell among weeds and thorns represent people who listened to God’s message, but the worries and preoccupation with life choked out the truth. They let fear get the better of them.

And finally, people who hear God’s message of salvation and surrender themselves to Him are like

the seeds that fall onto good soil and grow into strong plants, and produce a harvest by telling others what they have learned and Whom they have met (Jesus).



Swallow and Other Birds

Once upon a time a Countryman was sowing some hemp seeds in a field where a Swallow and some other birds were hopping about picking up their food.

‘Beware of that man,’ quoth the Swallow.

‘Why, what is he doing?’ said the others.

‘That is hemp seed he is sowing; be careful to pick up every one of the seeds, or else you will repent it.’

The birds paid no heed to the Swallow’s words, and by and by the hemp grew up and was made into cord, and of the cords nets were made, and many a bird that had despised the Swallow’s advice was caught in nets made out of that very hemp.

‘What did I tell you?’ said the Swallow.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is “Destroy the seed of evil, or it will grow up to your ruin”.

The Bat, the Birds, and the Beasts

Once upon a time a great conflict was about to come off between the Birds and the Beasts.

When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join.

The Birds that passed his perch said: ‘Come with us’; but he said: ‘I am a Beast.’

Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said: ‘Come with us’; but he said: ‘I am a Bird.’

Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away.

He then went to the Beasts, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is “He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends”.

The Belly and the Members

Once upon a time it occurred to the Members of the Body that they were doing all the work and the Belly was having all the food.

So they held a meeting, and after a long discussion, decided to strike work till the Belly consented to take its proper share of the work.

So for a day or two, the Hands refused to take the food, the Mouth refused to receive it, and the Teeth had no work to do.

But after a day or two the Members began to find that they themselves were not in a very active condition: the Hands could hardly move, and the Mouth was all parched and dry, while the Legs were unable to support the rest.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is that even the Belly in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the Body, and that all must work together or the Body will go to pieces.

“For the body is not one member, but many. 15) If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not

of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16) And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17) If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18) But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19) And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20) But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21) And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22) Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23) And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24) For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: 25) That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26) And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27) Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (1 Corinthians 12:14-27)

The Boiling Pot

Once upon a time, Ezekiel told a parable at Babylon concerning a boiling pot: “And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it: 4) Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. 5) Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein. 6) Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it. 7) For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; 8) That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered. 9) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great. 10) Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. 11) Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be

molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed. 12) She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. 13) In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. 14) I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.” (Ezekiel 24:3-14)

And the moral of the story is “ ... Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

The Bundle of Sticks

Once upon a time an old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice.

He ordered his servants to bring in a faggot of sticks, and said to his eldest son: ‘Break it.’

The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the Bundle.

The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful.

‘Untie the faggots,’ said the father, ‘and each of you take a stick.’

When they had done so, he called out to them: ‘Now, break,’ and each stick was easily broken.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is “Union gives strength”.

“And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken”

(Ecclesiastes 4:12).

A Kenyan proverb says, “Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable”

The Cave and the Sun

Once there was a dingy Cave,
Hidden beneath the soil.
Her life was one of misery, hardship and of toil.

But one day through a little crack
A voice was heard to say,”
Come into the Sunshine, out into the light,
Out of utter darkness, out of bitter night,
Come into the open air and into glorious day!”

But Cave was quite a skeptic.
She’d never seen the light.”
What is the Sunshine of which you speak?
It sounds too good for me.
But nevertheless I’ll venture out,
For this I’ve got to see!”

And see, she did, with awe-filled eyes that blinked in
wonderment
At all the brilliant colours bright, a new world to
behold,
She had to tell the Sunlight about her past life — dark
and cold.
Yet Mr Sun had never known what darkness was,

Or damp or dull, or cold

And so he too was a skeptic and would not find his
peace

Until he ventured underground to find the dark
beneath.

But unlike cave, who found the light when she
ventured into day,

The sun shone bright through caverns deep, and to his
sheer dismay

The damp walls sparkled in His light, the shadows ran
away

And in the once-dark chasms there shone the light of
day.

Where is the gloomy darkness? All I can see is light!
For where the Sun shines brightly there is no cold or
night.

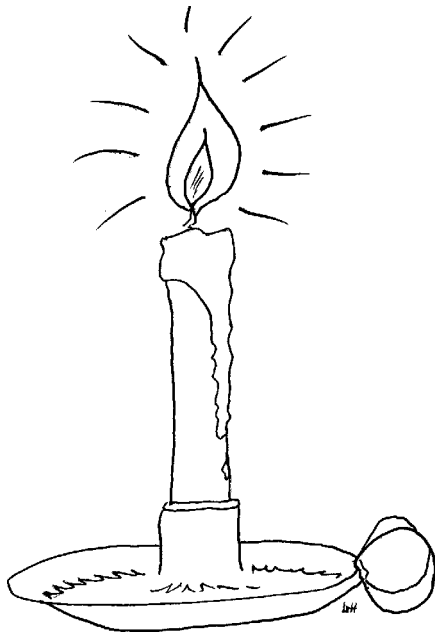
The lesson's plain, we need to be a light for all
around

For where there is the Light of the World
No darkness can be found.

— Lionel Hartley

And the moral of the story is, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

And, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46)



The Escaped Prisoner

Once upon a time this story was spoken by one of the sons of the prophets near Samaria: “And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. 36) Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him. 37) Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him. 38) So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. 39) And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. 40) And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it. 41) And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him

that he was of the prophets. 42) And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. 43) And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.” (1 Kings 20:35-43)

The Fox and the Wolf

The fable of the fox and the wolf aptly illustrates the way of the world that the Christian is to avoid.

Once upon a time a fox was peering into a well from which people drew water by lowering an empty bucket, and pulling up the full one that was at the bottom.

By accident the fox fell into the empty bucket and found itself at the bottom of the well.

It made a lot of noise trying to get out.

A wolf, hearing the noise, looked down and said to the fox, “What are you doing, my friend?” “I’m catching fish,” was the sly answer; “Come down to help me.”

“How can I?” asked the wolf.

“Jump into that bucket up there and you’ll be down here in a moment.”

The foolish wolf obeyed, and because it was heavier than the fox it went down and the fox came up and started to run away.

“Are you leaving me down here?” cried the wolf.

But the fox answered slyly **with the moral**, “That’s the way of the world, my friend; when one goes up, the other goes down.”



The Hare With Many Friends

Once upon a time a Hare was very popular with the other beasts who all claimed to be her friends.

But one day she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them by the aid of her many Friends.

So, she went to the horse, and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back.

But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master.

‘He felt sure,’ he said, ‘that all her other friends would come to her assistance.’

She then applied to the bull, and hoped that he would repel the hounds with his horns.

The bull replied: ‘I am very sorry, but I have an appointment with a lady; but I feel sure that our friend the goat will do what you want.’

The goat, however, feared that his back might do her some harm if he took her upon it.

The ram, he felt sure, was the proper friend to apply

to.

So she went to the ram and told him the case.

The ram replied: ‘Another time, my dear friend.

I do not like to interfere on the present occasion, as hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as hares.’

The Hare then applied, as a last hope, to the calf, who regretted that he was unable to help her, as he did not like to take the responsibility upon himself, as so many older persons than himself had declined the task.

By this time the hounds were quite near, and the Hare took to her heels and luckily escaped.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is that he that has many friends, has no friends.

The House We Build

Once upon a time a rich man wanted to help a poor man.

The rich man hired the poor man to build a house on the hillside and went away on a long journey.

The carpenter said to himself, “My boss is away and I can use cheap materials for the parts of the house which will not show.

The house will be weak and undesirable but nobody will know except me.”

But when the rich man returned he said, “The house is not for me: it is for you!” The carpenter accepted the key in astonishment.

Instead of a first class home he now had a fourth-class home.

God gives us a job, a life to build.

We have to live in the house we build.

And the moral of the story is that if we do a shoddy job, we cheat one person, and that is our self.

The Jealous Eagle

Dwight L. Moody told the fable of an eagle that could outfly another, and the other didn't like it.

Once upon a time the latter saw a sportsman one day, and said to him: "I wish you would bring down that eagle."

The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow.

So the eagle pulled one out of his wing.

The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high.

The envious eagle pulled out more feathers, and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly, and then the sportsman turned around and killed him.

— Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899)

And the moral of the story is, "If you are jealous, the person you hurt is yourself."

The Lion, the Fox, and the Beasts

Once upon a time a Lion gave out that he was sick unto death and summoned the animals to come and hear his Last Will and Testament.

So the Goat came to the Lion's cave, and stopped there listening for a long time.

Then a Sheep went in, and before she came out a Calf came up to receive the last wishes of the Lord of the Beasts.

But soon the Lion seemed to recover, and came to the mouth of his cave, and saw the Fox, who had been waiting outside for some time.

‘Why do you not come to pay your respects to me?’ said the Lion to the Fox.

‘I beg your Majesty's pardon,’ said the Fox, ‘but I noticed the track of the animals that have already come to you; and while I see many hoof-marks going in, I see none coming out.

Till the animals that have entered your cave come out again I prefer to remain in the open air.’

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is “It is easier to get into the enemy’s territory than out again”.

The Man and the Wood

A Man came into a Wood one day with tiny hatchet in his hand, and begged all the Trees to give him a small branch that he wanted for a particular purpose.

The Trees were good-natured and gave him one of their branches.

What did the Man do but fix it into a large axe head, and soon set to work cutting down tree after tree.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is that the Trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves.

The Man and the Wooden God

Once upon a time, in the old days, men used to worship sticks and stones and idols, and prayed to them to give them luck.

It happened that a Man was given a wooden statuette from his father and told it would be the source of great wealth.

Believing it to be a god, he prayed to it every day, but his luck never seemed to change.

He prayed and he prayed, but still he remained as unlucky as ever.

One day in a great rage he went to the wooden god, and with one blow swept it down from its pedestal.

The statuette broke in two, and what did he see? An immense number of coins flying all over the place.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is that things are seldom what they seem.

Man, the Boy, and the Donkey

Once upon a time a Man and his son were once going with their Donkey to market.

As they were walking along by its side a countryman passed them and said: ‘You fools, what is a Donkey for but to ride upon?’ So the Man put the Boy on the Donkey and they went on their way.

But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said: ‘See that lazy youngster, he lets his father walk while he rides.’

So the Man ordered his Boy to get off, and got on himself.

But they hadn’t gone far when they passed two women, one of whom said to the other: ‘Shame on that lazy lout to let his poor little son trudge along.’

Well, the Man didn’t know what to do, but at last he took his Boy up before him on the Donkey.

By this time they had come to the town, and the passers-by began to jeer and point at them.

The Man stopped and asked what they were scoffing

at.

The men said: ‘Aren’t you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey of yours and your hulking son?’ The Man and Boy got off and tried to think what to do.

They thought and they thought, till at last they cut down a pole, tied the donkey’s feet to it, and raised the pole and the donkey to their shoulders.

They went along amid the laughter of all who met them till they came to Market Bridge, when the Donkey, getting one of his feet loose, kicked out and caused the Boy to drop his end of the pole.

In the struggle the Donkey fell over the bridge, and his fore-feet being tied together he was drowned.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is that trying to please everyone means you will please no-one”.

The Poor Man's Ewe Lamb

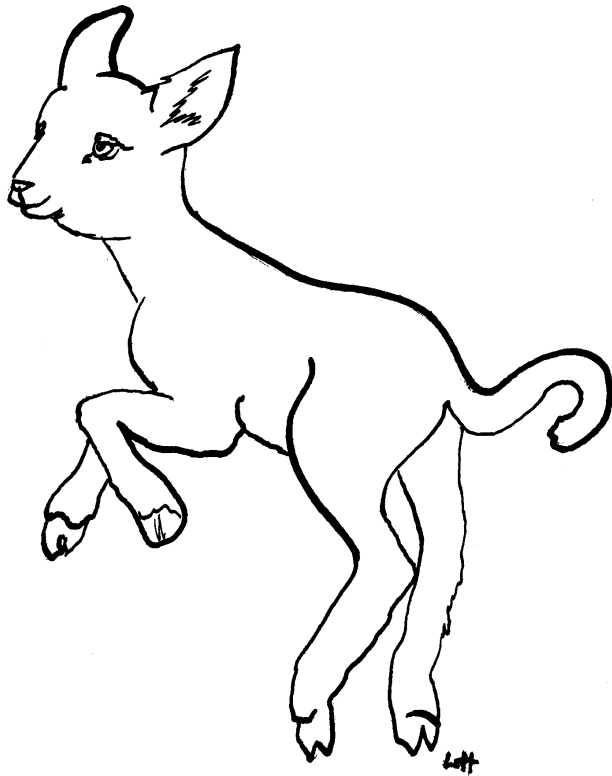
Once upon a time this was spoken by Nathan to David at Jerusalem when confronting David over his sins against God, Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite:

“And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2) The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3) But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4) And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5) And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: 6) And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. 7) And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God

of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8) And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9) Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10) Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11) Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12) For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13) And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” (2 Samuel 12:1-13)

And the moral of the story is that Nathan reached David's heart not by accusing words but by a pastoral story of injustice, knowing that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." (Proverbs 15:1)



The Talents

Once upon a time Jesus said, “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15) And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16) Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17) And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18) But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. 19) After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20) And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21) His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22) He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23) His lord said unto him, Well done,

good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24) Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strowed: 25) And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26) His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed: 27) Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28) Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29) For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:14-30)

And the moral of the story is verse 29: “For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

The Thistle and the Cedar

Once upon a time this fable was spoken by Jehoash, king of Israel at Jerusalem.

“And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. 10) Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?” (2 Kings 14:9-10)

And the moral of the story is that the effects of pride in others are intolerable to those who are themselves proud. Pride the sources of trouble and sin in private life; but when pride arises between public figures, they become the despair of whole kingdoms.

The Two Debtors

Once upon a time “one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. 37) And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38) And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39) Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40) And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41) There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42) And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43) Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44) And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this

woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45) Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46) My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48) And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49) And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50) And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” (Luke 7:36-50)

And the moral of the story is in verse 47, “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

The Young Thief and His Mother

Once upon a time a young Man had been caught in a daring act of theft and had been condemned to be executed for it.

He expressed his desire to see his Mother, and to speak with her before he was led to execution, and of course this was granted.

When his Mother came to him he said: 'I want to whisper to you,' and when she brought her ear near him, he nearly bit it off.

All the bystanders were horrified, and asked him what he could mean by such brutal and inhuman conduct.

'It is to punish her,' he said.

'When I was young I began with stealing little things, and brought them home to Mother.

Instead of rebuking and punishing me, she laughed and said: 'It will not be noticed.'

It is because of her that I am here to-day.'

‘He is right, woman,’ said the Priest.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Three Frogs on a Log

Once upon a time three frogs sat on a log and the smart one decided to jump off.

How many frogs were left on the log?

Three, just because we decide to do something doesn't mean we will actually do it.

While these three frogs sat on a log, the stupid one jumped off.

How many frogs were left on the log?

None. When one person does something stupid we all seem to follow

Three Golden Apples

Once upon a time swift-footed Atlanta challenged her suitors to race with her, with herself as the prize or death as the penalty of losing.

Many competed and lost their lives.

Finally, a man named Hippomenes, secreting on his person three golden apples, entered the contest.

As with the others, Atlanta swiftly passed him, but he threw an apple.

She, startled, stopped to pick it up.

He regained the lead, but soon Hippomenes again saw himself gradually slipping behind; and again he threw a golden apple.

Atlanta, charmed by its glitter, delayed to seize it, and fell behind.

But once again, as they neared the goal, she was about to pass him, and Hippomenes threw his last golden apple.

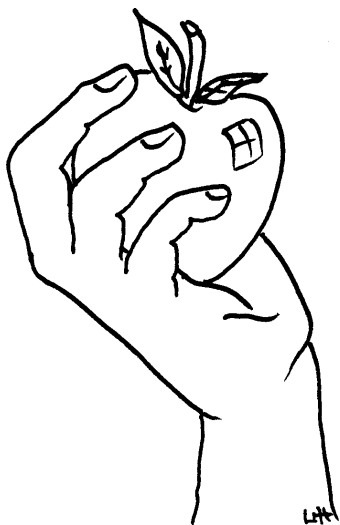
Atlanta, lured by its charm, stopped again-and lost

the race.

And the moral of the story is that Satan today throws along life's highway three golden apples that charm and destroy many a racer.

They are: "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life" Multitudes of Christians today are being turned aside from full obedience to the will and work of God by Satan's "three golden apples!"

(1 John 2:16-17) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."



Tortoise and the Birds

Once upon a time a Tortoise desired to change its place of residence, so he asked an Eagle to carry him to his new home, promising her a rich reward for her trouble.

The Eagle agreed and seizing the Tortoise by the shell with her talons soared aloft.

On their way they met a Crow, who said to the Eagle: ‘Tortoise is good eating.’

‘The shell is too hard,’ said the Eagle in reply.

‘The rocks will soon crack the shell,’ was the Crow’s answer; and the Eagle, taking the hint, let fall the Tortoise on a sharp rock, and the two birds made a hearty meal of the Tortoise.

—Aesop’s Fables

And Aesop tells us that **the moral of the story is**,
“Never soar aloft on an enemy’s pinions.”

Town Mouse and Country Mouse

Once upon a time a Town Mouse went on a visit to his cousin in the country.

He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome.

Beans and bacon, cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely.

The Town Mouse rather turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said: 'I cannot understand, Cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come you with me and I will show you how to live.

When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood a country life.'

No sooner said than done: the two mice set off for the town and arrived at the Town Mouse's residence late at night.

'You will want some refreshment after our long journey,' said the polite Town Mouse, and took his

friend into the grand dining-room.

There they found the remains of a fine feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice.

Suddenly they heard growling and barking.

‘What is that?’ said the Country Mouse.

‘It is only the dogs of the house,’ answered the other.

‘Only!’ said the Country Mouse.

‘I do not like that music at my dinner.’

Just at that moment the door flew open, in came two huge mastiffs, and the two mice had to scamper down and run off.

‘Good-bye, Cousin,’ said the Country Mouse,

‘What! going so soon?’ said the other.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear.”

“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.” (Proverbs 17:1)



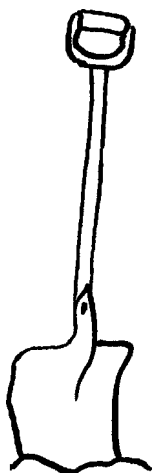
Treasure Hidden in a Field

Once upon a time, Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Matthew 13:44)

And the moral of the story is highlighting the immeasurable worth of the Kingdom of God and those whose eyes have been opened to it.

When having searched for the truth and have found it, searchers are willing to give up everything they have in order to follow the truth.

Everything else in the world starts to have lesser significance compared to what they have found in Jesus.



Tree and the Reed

Once upon a time a Tree said to a Reed that was growing at its foot, ‘Well, little one, why do you not plant your feet deeply in the ground, and raise your head boldly in the air as I do?’ ‘I am contented with my lot,’ said the Reed.

‘I may not be so grand, but I think I am safer.’

‘Safe!’ sneered the Tree.

‘Who shall pluck me up by the roots or bow my head to the ground?’

But it soon had to repent of its boasting, for a hurricane arose which tore it up from its roots, and cast it a useless log on the ground, while the little Reed, bending to the force of the wind, soon stood upright again when the storm had passed over.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Obscurity often brings safety.”

Trees Making a King

Once upon a time "... when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. 8) The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. 9) But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? 10) And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. 11) But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? 12) Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. 13) And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? 14) Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. 15) And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." (Judges 9:7-15)

And the moral of the story (adapted from a commentary by Matthew Henry (1662-1714), “There was no occasion for the trees to choose a king, they are all the trees of the Lord which he has planted. Nor was there any occasion for Israel to set a king over them, for the Lord was their King. Those who bear fruit for the public good, are justly respected and honoured by all that are wise, more than those who merely make a figure. All these fruit-trees gave much the same reason for their refusal to be promoted over the trees; or, as the margin reads it, to go up and down for the trees. To rule, involves a man in a great deal both of toil and care. Those who are preferred to public trust and power, must forego all private interests and advantages, for the good of others. And those advanced to honour and dignity, are in great danger of losing their fruitfulness. For which reason, they that desire to do good, are afraid of being too great. Jotham compares Abimelech to the bramble or thistle, a worthless plant, whose end is to be burned. Such a one was Abimelech.”

Trumpeter Taken Prisoner

Once upon a time a Trumpeter during a battle ventured too near the enemy and was captured by them.

They were about to proceed to put him to death when he begged them to hear his plea for mercy.

‘I do not fight,’ said he, ‘and indeed carry no weapon; I only blow this trumpet, and surely that cannot harm you; then why should you kill me?’

‘You may not fight yourself,’ said the others, ‘but you encourage and guide your men to the fight.’

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Words themselves may be deeds.”



Two Brothers Striving

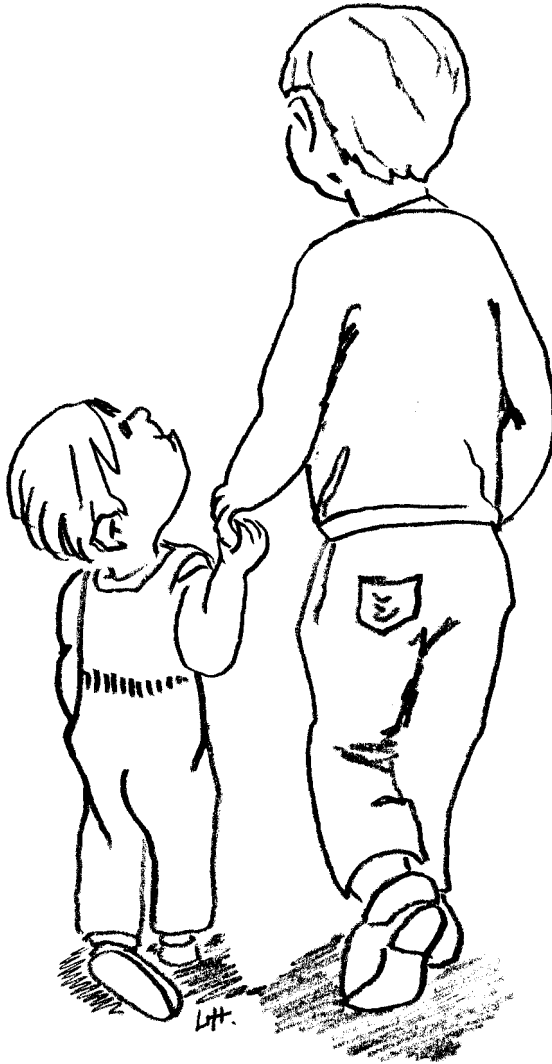
Once upon a time this fable was spoken by a woman of Tekoa at Jerusalem: “Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king’s heart was toward Absalom.

2) And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead: 3) And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth. 4) And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king. 5) And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. 6) And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. 7) And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the

earth. 8) And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee. 9) And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne be guiltless. 10) And the king said, Whosoever saith ought unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. 11) Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth. 12) Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on. 13) And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. 14) For we must needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him. 15) Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak

unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. 16) For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. 17) Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee. 18) Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. 19) And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: 20) To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.” (2 Samuel 14:1-20)

And the moral of the story is that the state of sinners is a state of banishment from God, however this widow pleads for God’s mercy and His leniency toward guilty sinners.



Two Crabs

Once upon a time a two Crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand.

‘Child,’ said the mother, ‘you are walking very ungracefully.

You should accustom yourself, to walking straight forward without twisting from side to side.’

‘Pray, mother,’ said the young one, ‘do but set the example yourself, and I will follow you.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Example is the best precept.”

Two Fellows and a Bear

Once upon a time two Fellows were travelling together through a wood, when a Bear rushed out upon them.

One of the travellers happened to be in front, and he seized hold of the branch of a tree, and hid himself among the leaves.

The other, seeing no help for it, threw himself flat down upon the ground, with his face in the dust.

The Bear, coming up to him, put his muzzle close to his ear, and sniffed and sniffed.

But at last with a growl he shook his head and slouched off, for bears will not touch dead meat.

Then the fellow in the tree came down to his comrade, and, laughing, said ‘What was it that Master Bruin whispered to you?’ ‘He told me,’ said the other, ‘Never trust a friend who deserts you at a pinch.’

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is told by Aesop,
“Never trust a friend who deserts you at a pinch.”

Two Pots on the Riverbank

Once upon a time two Pots had been left on the bank of a river, one of brass, and one of earthenware.

When the tide rose they both floated off down the stream.

Now the earthenware pot tried its best to keep aloof from the brass one, which cried out: ‘Fear nothing, friend, I will not strike you.’

‘But I may come in contact with you,’ said the other, ‘if I come too close; and whether I hit you, or you hit me, I shall suffer for it.’

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is that the strong and the weak cannot keep company.

Two Sons

Once upon a time Jesus said, “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29) He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30) And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.” (Matthew 21:28-30)

And the moral of the story is found in verses 31-32, “Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32) For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.” (Matthew 21:31-32)

Unmerciful Servant

Once upon a time Jesus said, “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 23) Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24) And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25) But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26) The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27) Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28) But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29) And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30) And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31)

So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32) Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33) Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34) And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. “ (Matthew 18:21-34)

And the moral of the story is may be read in verse 35, “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” (Matthew 18:35)

Vineyard and the Tenants

Once upon a time Jesus said, “Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34) And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35) And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36) Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37) But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38) But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39) And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40) When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41) They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42) Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become

the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matthew 21:33-42)

And the moral of the story is in found in verses 43-46, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44) And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45) And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46) But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet." (Matthew 21:43-46)

Vineyard Yielding Wild Grapes

Once upon a time this fable was spoken by Isaiah at Jerusalem, “Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2) And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3) And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4) What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5) And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6) And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.” (Isaiah 5:1-6)

And the moral of the story is that God expects good fruit from those that enjoy His blessings.

Watchfulness

Once upon a time Jesus said concerning his Second Coming, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33) Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34) For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35) Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36) Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37) And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” (Mark 13:32-37)

And the moral of the story is (Luke 12:40) “Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” (Luke 12:40)

Wedding Banquet

Once upon a time “Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3) And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4) Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5) But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6) And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7) But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8) Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9) Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10) So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11) And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12) And he

saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13) Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14) For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:1-14)

And the moral of the story is that the marriage feast is a depiction of heaven.

Jesus invited salvation first to His specially chosen people (the Jews), but they (and especially the leaders) rejected His message.

Heaven is for everyone, no matter what their background is or what society thinks of them.

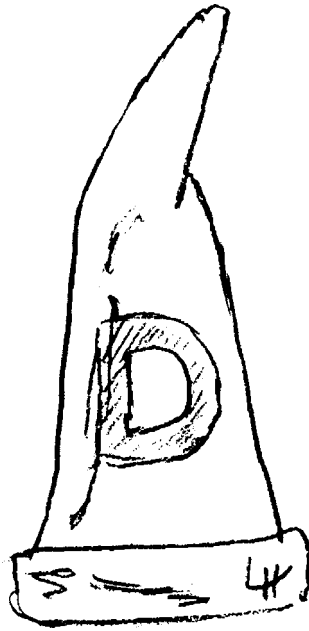
Heaven is freely available for those who desire to be there.

Weeds

Once upon a time “Another parable [Jesus] put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25) But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28) He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30) Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

And the moral of the story is that we are to live in harmony and told not to discriminate against anyone, categorizing some as ‘wheat’ and others as ‘weeds. but and show His love to everyone. “Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2) For with what judgment ye

judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matthew 7:1-2)



What Are You Missing?

Once upon a time a teenage boy was deeply interested in scientific subjects, especially astronomy.

So his father bought him a very expensive telescope.

Since the young fellow had studied the principles of optics, he found the instrument to be most intriguing.

He took it apart, examined the lenses, and made detailed calculations on the distance of its point of focus.

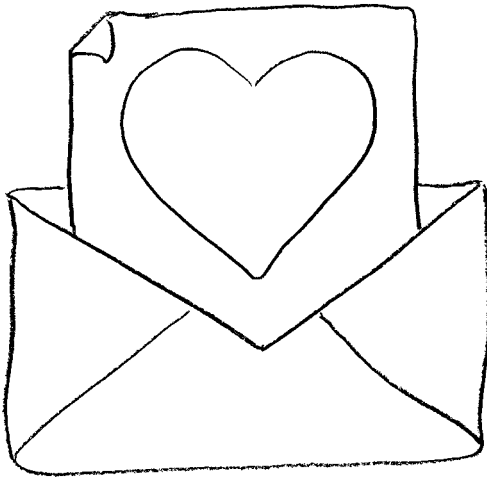
The youth became so absorbed in gaining a technical knowledge of the telescope itself that he never got around to looking at the stars.

He knew a lot about that fine instrument, but he missed seeing the wonders of the heavens.

And the moral of the story is that, as Christians, to know all the facts and figures contained in the Bible to gain eternal life, is not the end for which God has given us His Book. The purpose is that we might see God and get to know and love Him.

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have

eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”
(John 5:39)



When Love is Sick

Once upon a time

Love was feeling poorly;
So he went to the Doctor
On Monday, bright and early,
To see what alchemy would cure the pain,
And light up the love in his life again.

In order to have a healthy love;
A love that's warm and close,
The doctor prescribed the giving of love.
And if it doesn't work:-
Double the dose.

— Lionel Hartley

Wind and Sun

Once upon a time the Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger.

Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and the Sun said: 'I see a way to decide our dispute.

Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger.

You begin.'

So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller.

But the harder he blew the more closely did the traveller wrap his cloak round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair.

Then the Sun came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his cloak on.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Kindness is more effective than severity.”



Wolf and Crane

Once upon a time a Wolf had been gorging on an animal he had killed, when suddenly a small bone in the meat stuck in his throat and he could not swallow it.

He soon felt terrible pain in his throat, and ran up and down groaning and groaning and seeking for something to relieve the pain.

He tried to induce every one he met to remove the bone.

‘I would give anything,’ said he, ‘if you would take it out.’

At last the Crane agreed to try, and told the Wolf to lie on his side and open his jaws as wide as he could.

Then the Crane put its long neck down the Wolf’s throat, and with its beak loosened the bone, till at last it got it out.

‘Will you kindly give me the reward you promised?’ said the Crane.

The Wolf grinned and showed his teeth and said: ‘Be

content. You have put your head inside a Wolf's mouth and taken it out again in safety; that ought to be reward enough for you.'

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is that gratitude and greed go not together.

Wolf and Lamb

Once upon a time a Wolf was lapping at a spring on a hillside, when, looking up, what should he see but a Lamb just beginning to drink a little lower down.

‘There’s my supper,’ thought he, ‘if only I can find some excuse to seize it.’

Then he called out to the Lamb, ‘How dare you muddle the water from which I am drinking?’

‘Nay, master, nay,’ said Lambikin; ‘if the water be muddy up there, I cannot be the cause of it, for it runs down from you to me.’

‘Well, then,’ said the Wolf, ‘why did you call me bad names this time last year?’ ‘That cannot be,’ said the Lamb; ‘I am only six months old.’

‘I don’t care,’ snarled the Wolf; ‘if it was not you it was your father;’ and with that he rushed upon the poor little Lamb and ate her all up.

— Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Any excuse will serve a tyrant.”

Wolf and the Kid

Once upon a time a Kid was perched up on the top of a house, and looking down saw a Wolf passing under him.

Immediately he began to revile and attack his enemy.

‘Murderer and thief,’ he cried, ‘what do you here near honest folks’ houses? How dare you make an appearance where your vile deeds are known?’

‘Curse away, my young friend,’ said the Wolf, ‘It is easy to be brave from a safe distance.’

—Aesop’s Fables

And the moral of the story is, “It is easy to be brave from a safe distance.”

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Once upon a time a Wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep owing to the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs.

But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been flayed and thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep.

The Lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the Wolf was wearing, began to follow the Wolf in the Sheep's clothing; so, leading the Lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is that appearances can be deceptive.

Also “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” (Acts 20:29)

Woodman and Serpent

Once upon a time on a wintry day a Woodman was tramping home from his work when he saw something black lying on the snow.

When he came closer he saw it was a Serpent to all appearance dead.

But he took it up and put it in his bosom to warm while he hurried home.

As soon as he got indoors he put the Serpent down on the hearth before the fire.

The children watched it and saw it slowly come to life again.

Then one of them stooped down to stroke it, but the Serpent raised its head and put out its fangs and was about to sting the child to death.

So the Woodman seized his axe, and with one stroke cut the Serpent in two.

—Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is not to expect gratitude from the wicked.

Workers in the Vineyard

Once upon a time Jesus said, “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2) And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3) And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4) And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. 5) Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. 6) And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7) They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. 8) So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9) And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10) But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11) And when they had

received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12) Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13) But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14) Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15) Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16) So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.” (Matthew 20:1-16)

And the moral of the story is in found in verse 16, “So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.” (Matthew 20:16)

Yclept

Once upon a time, a man lent money to his friend. But later, friend denied that he had borrowed anything. So, the man took him to court.

The magistrate asked, “Do you have any witnesses?”

The man said, “No, I gave him the money in private in an open field just out of town.”

The magistrate thought for a moment and said, “Then go to the place where you gave him the money and bring me a handful of soil from there. I want to use it as Exhibit A, to answer some questions that I still have.”

The man was confused, but he didn’t argue. He left to get the soil.

While he was gone, the magistrate turned to the man who owed the money and asked, “Do you think it will take long for him to reach the spot?”

Without thinking, the man replied, “Quite a while, for that place is a long way from here.”

The magistrate smiled and said, “How do you know

it's a long way way, unless the place exists, that you were there, and you took his money?"

With that, the magistrate ruled that the man had to pay back the money with interest and additionally fined him for contempt of court.

And the moral of the story is that he was yclep (called out for what he was): a liar and a cheat.

(Numbers 32:23) "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

(Luke 12:2-3) "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. 3) Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

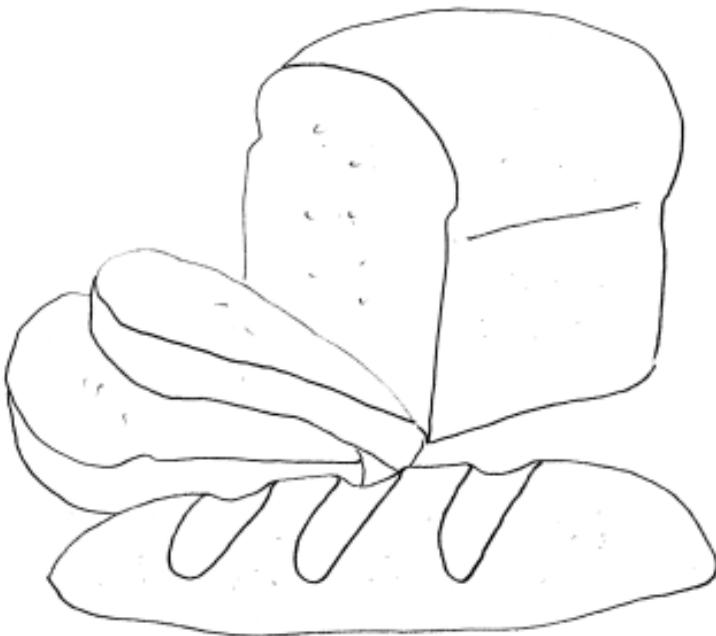
(Galatians 6:6-7) "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7) Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Yeast

Once upon a time, “Another parable spake he [Jesus] unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” (Matthew 13:33)

(see also ‘Leaven of the Spirit’, page 91)

And the moral of the story is that just as a small amount of yeast makes bread dough rise from within, so when we have even only a little faith, God can change our heart from within to change how we live.



Yielding to All

Once upon a time, in the old days, when men were allowed to have many wives, a middle-aged Man had one wife that was old and one that was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like herself.

Now the Man's hair was turning grey, which the young Wife did not like, as it made him look too old for her husband.

So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones.

But the elder Wife saw her husband growing grey with concern, for she did not like to be mistaken for his mother.

So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could find.

The consequence was the Man soon found himself entirely bald.

— Aesop's Fables

And the moral of the story is, “Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.”

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